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HOME LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIES

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS,
AND SIX SCENES

BY
GILBERT GUEST



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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

GRANDMA—Mrs. Allingham, Sr. The dominant influence for good on the farm and in the County. Originally from “Old Virginny.”

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM—Grandma’s oldest son, and owner of Sunshine Farm, in Nebraska.

MOLLIE ALLINGHAM—William Allingham’s sole surviving daughter.

JACK ALLINGHAM—Sixteen, Mollie’s brother.

QUINCEY—Little darkey, Jack’s pal, and Dinah’s grandson.

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—Cultured gentleman, great friend of William.

MR. JIM—Twenty-one, Mr. Robertson’s son.

MR. WEST—A Movey Picture Man from the South.

MR. HILTON—Scientist—a silent man. Much in love with his wife.

MRS. HILTON—A young society butterfly, wife of Hilton.

CARLEONE SPINOLA—A Spanish girl educated in America at the same school with Mollie. A strong, passionate nature.

AGNES REDMAN—The Angel of the school and of Mollie’s and Carleone’s class.

DINAH—Old Virginny Darkey. Boss of the Allingham kitchen.

MOVEY MAN—Assistant of Mr. West.

SUE—A colored girl assisting Dinah.

NEIGHBOR (*Tom Sloan*)—One who appreciates Dinah’s pies.

NEIGHBOR—(*Joe Cass*).

FARM HANDS—At least five. They do no speaking.

SISTER AMBROSE—The Girls’ teacher of English at St. Joseph’s.

CHARACTERS

FIRST ACT—FIRST SCENE

Grandma, William, Robertson, Sr., Mr. Jim, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton, Dinah, Jack and Quincey, Movey Man, Farm hands. Girls are spoken of.

FIRST ACT—SECOND SCENE

Grandma, Jack and Quincey, Mr. Robertson, Sr.; Mrs. Hilton and Mr. Jim, Dinah, William.

SECOND ACT—FIRST SCENE

Carleone, Sister Ambrose, Agnes, Mollie, Mr. West.

SECOND ACT—SECOND SCENE

Sister Ambrose, Carleone, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Jim, Mollie, Agnes, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton, gardener, couple of school girls.

THIRD ACT—FIRST SCENE

Agnes, Dinah, Mollie, Carleone, Mr. West, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Jim, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton, Jack and Quincey.

THIRD ACT—SECOND SCENE

Grandma, Mr. West, Dinah, Carleone, William, Quincey, Jack, Mollie, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Jim, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton.

HOME LIGHT OF THE PRAIRIES

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

FIRST ACT—SCENE ONE

Setting: A Nebraska farm. Time: the present.

Introduces all the characters. Scene One shows Grandma's attitude towards divorce; introduces Mr. Robertson, Senior, and tells the story of his past life.

SCENE TWO

Second Scene of the First Act is suggestive of the atmosphere of Nebraska farm life; tells of Grandma's life sorrow.

SECOND ACT—SCENE ONE

Introduces us to the girls of the farm in the Convent School—also explains the reason why the girls leave school in May, and return home, before the usual closing. A strong factor of the plot introduced.

SCENE TWO

Closes with a cloud of suspicion on the honor girl and a movie man in disgrace.

THIRD ACT—SCENE ONE

A sequel to Mr. Robertson's story—and the *closing of Agnes' life work*.

SCENE TWO

Knotty things straightened out and the clouds lifted.
Time of the whole play about four weeks.

FIRST ACT—SCENE ONE

(Interior of a Nebraska farm house; kitchen, big range at back. Left—Large table; center—dresser at right, dishes and big jar of flowers near dresser old fashioned settee, big arm chair, footstool, basket of stockings on one side, a big tin dish of vegetables to be prepared, big jar of flowers in center of a half dressed table, left, a side table near range, covered with pies, eatables, pitcher and glasses, door back center, and if convenient, two back windows looking out one on the barn and the other on a field. Door at the right side entrance. Curtain rises on Dinah peeling vegetables. Left center—Grandma, seated in arm-chair mending stockings.)

GRANDMA—"Dinah, dear, please take a look at those pies, I fear the oven is too hot."

DINAH—*(Doesn't move)*.—"Sho chile, you all time figgeditin 'bout hot oven! Dear knows Ise baked 'nough pies in my life-time to know 'bout hot oven. Dem dar aint been in three minutes." *(Shouts of men outside. Some seen moving in the barn yard)*.

DINAH—*(Hastily rising, dropping peelings on floor, which grandma quietly stoops and picks up and places in Dinah's pan)*. "Fore de Lord, taint time for eats, is it? Why I just done wash de dishes from breakfast. Dis is a lan' o' tribulation; nothing but work, work." *(Rushes to the oven, pulls out a black pie, raises the same with looks of consternation. Grandma smiles, goes quietly towards her, takes the pie from her, empties it in a pail saying:)*

GRANDMA—"Never mind, Dinah, 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good. This burnt pie will give the pigs a great deal of pleasure."

DINAH—*(Out of patience)*. "Pigs nothin'! I don't waste my strength making pie for pigs. I bet that good for nothin nigger, Quincey, turned that damper up, just for sheer devilment. I'll warm his skin for him." *(Shouts and laughing)*. "Dat's de men for shure, and *(glancing at an old-fashioned clock,)* 'tis only half-past ten." *(Grandma has been quietly moving about putting in pies and taking others out and cutting some up. Goes to the left, opens churn, fills a pitcher with but-*

termilk. All the time Dinah is talking, and mops her face with her large apron).

GRANDMA—"I suppose 'tis too hot to stay out, and instead of waiting for the boys to carry out their lunch, the men are coming into the house for it themselves." (*She still works quietly*).

DINAH—(*Center*). "Huh! Hot, hot nothin'! Comin' to muss up that all. I bet yo', Grandma, if this Nebraska was old Virginny, which it 'taint, them white trash wouldn't dast come into a lady's kitchen without an invite." (*Taking knife from grandma and pushing her forward*). "Give it here chile. Ise good enough to wait on 'em. You go set down. Tirin' yo'self to death, the first lady of the lan'." (*Grandma laughs and comes to center*).

GRANDMA—"Never more a lady than when working, Dinah." (*Men enter, dressed for work. Take off hats when they see Grandma. They are headed by Mr. Allingham or William, Grandma's son, closely followed by Quincy and Jack*).

WILLIAM—"Well, mother, we thought we would save you a trip to the fields and take a little rest in between. 'Tis fearfully hot for May." (*Men crowd around Grandma laughing and talking, while Dinah, who has grabbed Quincy by the wool, hauls him to the left footlights, shaking him as she talks*).

DINAH—"You good for nothin' nigger! How often I tol' yo' to let the stove alone? Answer me. (*Shakes him while he, in abject terror, rolls his eyes and tries to squirm away*). "Answer me, I say. Have you done touch it? You aint gwine to have pies for a week. You all made me burn a pie clean up."

QUINCY—(*With a subdued howl*). "Oh, mammy, don' yo' touch me. I never done nothin'. Cross me heart, hope to die, if I did."

DINAH—"Cross your heart, huh? Yo' have as much heart as your worthless nigger of a father had." (*Shaking him, Quincey gives vent to a loud howl which startles the talking group in the middle, and William turns angrily towards the two, taking Quincey forcibly away from Dinah with:*)

WILLIAM—"Dinah, for heaven's sake, what are you doing to that boy?"

DINAH—"I reckon dis boy belongs to me if he was born free. Ise gwine to teach him de fear of the Lord and make him quit his lyin'."

GRANDMA—(*Leaves center, approaches the angry Dinah, draws her down to the footlights apart from the center crowd, which in the meantime scatters around the room, two or three men on the settee or near the table, one on the footstool, one in the armchair, Jack and Quincey back of the table facing audience, inspecting the pies with apparent delight*). “Dinah, dear friend, don’t get so angry with Quincey. He is only a heedless boy.”

DINAH—“Dat’s all right, Miss ’Lizabeth, but I got to teach dat boy not to lie. Why de Almighty wouldn’t let him inside the gate o’ Heaven, he’s such a liar.”

GRANDMA—“Dinah, you’ll teach him truth by *believing* that he *tells* the truth. You’ll find the *best*, if you will *look* for the best.” (*Goes back left and cuts pie. Men crowd around, making show of great delight. Grandma goes to churn near center door, takes off top. William jumps to help her, assists her to pour buttermilk into big pitcher. Men eat and drink around the table*).

DINAH—(*Says to audience*). “When Miss ’Lizabeth begins to preach, she’d charm de birds off de trees.”

NEIGHBOR—(*Comes to Dinah from table, eating a big piece of pie*). “Says, Dinah, this is great. You sure are the champion pie maker.”

DINAH—(*Much pleased*). “’N you sure are de champeen pie-eater. But Miss ’Llingham she’d a hand in de making of dese pies; of course, I done teach her.”

NEIGHBOR—“Yes, Grandma has a hand in more than pie-making. There isn’t anything good done in the *county* from politics to church going for the last thirty years, since she came here from Virginy, that Grandma hasn’t had a hand in, Dinah.”

DINAH (*Delighted*). “Yes, Tom Sloane, you done tell de truth dar. She come here to Nebraska when it were a wilderness, nearly breaking her father’s and mother’s hearts. They couldn’t give up their plantation, and she wouldn’t give up Jack Allingham, a dude just from College, crazy with de West fever. But a better man never lived, and of all de boys dey done have, William, all dat’s left, is sure de picture of his father. De Almighty have mercy on his soul.”

NEIGHBOR—“Yes, Allingham was a man in a thousand, and his son bids fair to outdo him as a farmer. Well, this won’t do. Come on fellers, we’d best make hay while the sun shines.” (*Exit. The others*

crowd towards footlights talking to Dinah. She is much pleased. All go out except William and Neighbor Two).

NEIGHBOR TWO—Joe Cass—"Say, Dinah, Parson Brown, a man of your color, a leetle lighter, perhaps, comes to town next week to open a camp meeting. You'd better set your cap for him."

DINAH—(*Much pleased*). "Ah, you Joe Cass, quit your fooling. I done set my cap no more. De first cap was too tarnation bad, I done *want* no more. And anyhow, I've no use for dem *light* shades. Dey aint de right article."

NEIGHBOR TWO—Joe Cass—"But he's a fine *preacher*, Dinah."

DINAH—"Preacher, nothin', I aint no Methodist. Me ole Marster were a Cafolic. I has de same persuasion. Well, good mornin', Joe. I'll tell *Sue* about de preacher. She's just about mad to set her cap for anything dat walks *on two legs*." (*Goes back, gathers up plates, gets a big dish pan, washes dishes, sings in a subdued tone while Neighbor Two goes out and Grandma detains William, saying—near the footlights, center:*)

GRANDMA—"Stay, William, you look flushed; rest awhile, and let me bathe your head."

WILLIAM—"Nonsense, mother, I am not any hotter than the rest of the men. The heat is certainly fierce today, a regular Nebraska heat, and that beats 'old Virginy' *all to nothing*."

GRANDMA—"But you know, dear, ever since that hurt you got last harvest, you are not yourself."

WILLIAM—"There you go. You'd spoil if you weren't *mothering* something. Here, take this rascal and give *him* mothering. He'd need one after the lamming Dinah *just gave him*." (*Going, hands Quency to her, the darkey making grimaces of delight at Grandma, when seated, abstractedly smooths down his wool*).

GRANDMA—"William, you haven't Mollie to look after you now." (*Looks up at him, while he gazes down at her with great tenderness and says:*)

WILLIAM—"No, mother darling, you mean that since Mollie's death, you not having *her* to look after must give *me* more love. She was a good wife, naturally, but your brave example made her a *grand one*." (*Grandma pleased, wipes away a tear and at the same*

time unconsciously clutches at Quincey's wool, making him roll his eyes grotesquely).

GRANDMA—"I was in hopes, William, when you invited the Robertsons and the Hiltons, that you would take time to rest while playing the host."

QUINCEY—"What's playing de host, Grandma? Is it a *new game*?"

GRANDMA—"Yes, Quincey child, a new game for your Uncle William."

WILLIAM—"I was in hopes, mother, that when our friends promised to spend a quiet summer with us, that *you*, too, would take a rest and get Jenny Rutledge to help you out. *Sue* isn't much use and *Dinah* is getting too old."

QUINCEY—"An' too bossy. Lordy, but she aint got no mercy on me at all. My bones sure ache when Mammy Dinah get after dis poor nigger."

WILLIAM—"Quincey, you rascal, you ought to speak with more respect of your grandma."

QUINCEY—"Huh! She's only my mammy, dis yere am my grandma." (*Cuddling up to her*).

WILLIAM—(*Laughs.*) "You see, mother, you spoil them all. But, mother, I am in earnest about Jenny. She would be delighted to earn a little money, even if her father is a well-to-do farmer."

GRANDMA—"I am well aware of the fact that the modern American girl is always anxious to get an extra penny; the craze for dress has the same power over the country girl as it has over her city sister; but Dinah and Sue are more than enough. You must remember, lad, when years ago, I left a luxurious home and bade adieu to a life of inaction, I came to a West that was so barren of the smallest comfort that in order to preserve life, I found increasing work a stern necessity, so that *work* became, in time, my joy and for you to doom me *now* to inaction, would be to doom me to a living death."

WILLIAM—(*Laughing and seizing her hands in his*). "Oh, mother, mother, you are incorrigible. Here I am the richest farmer in Alliance, and you are so possessed with your idea of work and that you don't care a *hang* what the neighbors think of *me*. Wouldn't be surprised to hear that Allingham is 'so darned stingy' that he makes his old mother wear herself out, as a hired help."

QUINCEY—(*He has been looking out of the back window during the two last speeches and calls excitedly*). “Oh, Grandma, here’s Uncle Bob a-coming.”

GRANDMA—(*Severely*). “Quincy, how often have I told you, that you are not to call every gentleman or lady your uncle or aunt?”

QUINCEY—“I know, Grandma, but he done *tol’* me to call him *Uncle Bob*; so help me—”

GRANDMA—(*Horried*). “Quincey, you terrible boy, don’t you dare to swear.” (*Enter Mr. Robt. Robertson, Senior, and Mr. James Robertson, Junior, carrying arm-coats, fishing tackle, and hats*).

MR. ROBT. ROBERTSON. “By George! This is living. Though I haven’t caught many fish, Allingham, I tell you, I have *caught* something.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Yes, father nearly caught a crab, Grandma. Gee! You ought to have seen him.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Jim, Jim, if you tell tales on your old father, he will turn states evidence and tell on you, young man.”

WILLIAM—“‘Old father,’ is good, Robertson. Why, man alive, you two could easily pass for brothers.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Of course, Allingham, my son here is only twenty-one years younger than I, but white hair and wrinkles—”

GRANDMA—“My dear friend, if you had reached my age, you might talk of grey hairs and wrinkles. You are a young man yet, Mr. Robertson.

ROBERTSON, SR.—“That settles it, madame, if you declare me young, I shall be the veriest juvenile on this farm.”

QUINCEY—“Say, Grandma, what’s juvenile?”

WILLIAM—(*Laughs*). “Why, Quincey boy, juvenile is a polite name for kid, understand?”

QUINCEY—(*Laughs and turns a somersault*). “Oh! Ki! Yi! I understand. A kid is me.”

DINAH—(*Rushing forward catching Quincey’s legs and bringing him down with a slap*). “You low down nigger, you! Aint yo’ got no manners? Yo’ go right out smack and tote me some coal. Dear, dear! Such a time as I has a bringing up that chile, trying to learn him manners, and Massa William eternally spoiling all I done!” (*Goes grumbling back to the stove; business, seems absorbed in her work but*

stops occasionally to listen and shake her head in disapproval or the opposite).

(The four seat themselves near footlights, Mr. Robertson particularly attentive to Grandma).

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Father, this *farm-life* takes us back to the days of Homer when master and servant were equal.”

WILLIAM—“Jim, you wouldn’t find this same condition of things on other farms. Our life is an exceptional one. Mother, when leaving the home of her girlhood to follow my father’s destiny, first brought Dinah with her, and when Quincey’s father and mother died in Virginia, to satisfy Dinah’s heart-cravings, mother sent home for Quincey, a little pickaninny, and since that time both Dinah and Quincey have been well spoilt.”

MAN AT DOOR—*(Calls to William)*. “Say, Mister Allingham, Dick Benton wants to see you about that colt—the bay one. *(Exit)*.”

WILLIAM—*(In great hurry, catches up his straw hat, goes to door, stops, and calls back:)* “Did either of you care to go with me. You’ll probably see some Nebraska bargaining.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—*(Gaily rising)*. “If Nebraska bargaining is half so witty as its political meetings, I’m your man, Mr. Allingham. Coming, Father?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—*(From seat)*. “No, Jim, I have more attraction here.”

ROBERTSON JR.—*(As he passes Dinah to go out, bows to her, much to her delight)*.

DINAH—*(Coming forward, wiping hands on her apron—)*. “Lawsey, did yo’ see that bow? The first gentleman in Virginny couldn’t beat it.” *(Goes back singing)*.

GRANDMA—“Is this your first experience on a farm, Mr. Robertson?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“I have seen many phases of life, as I have been a great traveler in the last twenty years, but, strange to say, I have never touched closely the *farm-life* till now. ’Twas a lucky day when Allingham and I met at Nebraska’s last political convention. Ever since that I have been planning to make a summer of it on the farm. Jim seems to be so infatuated with it, that I believe, in my soul, I’ll have to buy a farm for him.”

GRANDMA—"Yes, you might do worse. William would be delighted to make a farmer of you."

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Your son, madam, is a man to inspire another with a deep affection. You have certainly much to be thankful for—a beautiful home, a most interesting family, and an influence that dominates a county. The power of America, as it was in Rome, is the *agricultural life*. Given my life over again, I should have been a farmer."

GRANDMA—(*Laughs*). "Just at present you are experiencing the pleasant part of farm-life, but if you had to rough it as we have done, (*shakes her head—is mending stockings*). As you say, the farmer is the strength of America, but if agriculture is for America what it was for Rome, America holds within herself the same menace, that helped Rome's downfall."

ROBERTSON, SR. "And that is—?"

GRANDMA.—"A terrible plague spot, almost as bad—yes, quite as bad as was that of slavery—"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"You interest me, Mrs. Allingham. Is it politics?"

GRANDMA—"Worse than politics; Americans, thank God, are not all politicians. This evil penetrates into the humblest home."

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Is it *disease*, Mrs. Allingham?"

GRANDMA—(*Earnestly*). "Yes, it is a disease—a leprosy—(*In his attention Mr. Robertson has half risen and is bending towards her as she says divorce, he drops back with a start into his chair looking very much worked up*). 'D I V O R C E.' Are you ill, Mr. Robertson?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"No, no, not exactly ill. You object to divorce?"

GRANDMA—"Object to it! I have a contempt for it as has every right minded man or woman; and if every woman in the land took the *stand* I have taken for the last twenty years, divorce would be stamped out as effectually as were the disease epidemics of Europe."

ROBERTSON, SR.—"What stand *did* you take?"

GRANDMA—(*Rising and pointing to the back door.*) "Over the *threshold of that door*, no divorced man or woman may cross."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Groaning aloud walks slowly in the direction of the door*).

GRANDMA—(*Much startled*). “Mr. Robertson, where are you going?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Much moved, turns in the center of the stage*). “You have pronounced my doom. I am a divorced man.”

GRANDMA—(*Much agitated*). “Forgive me, forgive me; but I cannot *unsay* it.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“I regret your principles, madam, and I shall lose no time in relieving you of my presence; but before going, allow me to say that though a *divorcee* myself, I have *NEVER* believed in divorce.”

GRANDMA—(*Much puzzled*). “And yet you say that you are divorced?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Against my will. No power on earth could convince me that divorce is right. She got the divorce from *me*.” (*Stands in center, a picture of sadness*).

GRANDMA—(*Tries not to yield to her feelings of sympathy and speaks with apparent sternness, but the audience must be convinced that she is sorry for him*). “Mr. Robertson, on what grounds?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*With deep feeling*). “Cruelty.”

GRANDMA—“May I ask how many years ago this was?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Nineteen years ago. My son was two years; my daughter, one year.”

GRANDMA—(*Startled*). “Your daughter?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Advancing right center, with outstretched hands*). “Mrs. Allingham, let me *plead* my cause, and then after hearing it, see if you be justified in banishing me from the *first real* touch of home life I have had in years.”

GRANDMA—(*Motions him to be seated*). (*He draws his chair near to her and speaks with rapid emotion*). . . .

ROBERTSON, SR. “Twenty-two years ago I married Nellie Gibson, a poor girl, a mere child in years. I don’t think it manly to speak ill of the absent, but in order to understand my case, it is necessary for you to know that Nellie was a spoiled child, pretty extravagant and *utterly* selfish. Although I was far from being a rich man when I married her, in comparison with her position in life, *I* was *wealthy*. Mrs. Allingham, how do you regard matrimony? What does your church teach?”

GRANDMA—“That matrimony is a sacrament.”

ROBERTSON, SR. "Nellie Gibson looked upon matrimony as a *contract*, a business contract, a deal between two parties which was to enable one, at least, to live in luxury and pleasure. For her, the fact of being married, carried no duty—no responsibility. When I tried to teach her that old debts must be paid before incurring new ones, that children were more than mere playthings, that we owed something to humanity and God, she accused me of cruelty and, as I made no effort in the public court to exonerate myself, believing such a suit to be *degradation*, she won out and to my *soul's* anguish, the court gave her my *daughter*. She didn't want my son because she fancied he resembled me, whereas, in fact, as he grows older the resemblance to *her* becomes more marked.

GRANDMA—"You never married?"

ROBERTSON—(*With dignity*). "Your question, madam, is an *insult*."

GRANDMA—(*Rising*). "It was. Forgive me? And she?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"She? She married."

GRANDMA—"Where is she now?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Somewhere in Europe. On her second marriage, her attorney notified me she did not need my support, and when I made an effort to regain possession of my daughter, then ten years old, I was informed that any effort on my part would bring on another suit. Heart sore, I gave up and soon lost track of her. That is my story. I wait my doom."

GRANDMA—"One question, my poor friend,—you are not known as a divorced man?"

ROBERTSON, SR. "No, few know it; and, they are *far* from here."

GRANDMA—"Your son?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Sore with the disgrace of it, I left my native city, Cincinnati, and have lived West and South ever since; and not wanting to have a shadow cast over my son's young life, I have allowed him to think his mother dead. No, my son does not know me as a *divorced* man. What is your verdict?"

GRANDMA—(*Smiling graciously, approaching him with outstretched hand*). "I have no verdict, my friend." (*Clasping his hand*). "My home is yours."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Much affected*). “Tell me, Mrs. Allingham, you are a woman of faith; why did God so try me?”

GRANDMA—(*Gently pulling him to his chair and smiling kindly*). “Do you believe it was God?”

ROBERTSON, SR. “Has He not the management of our lives?”

GRANDMA—(*Seated in her arm-chair, leans over and gently touches him with her right hand*). “My friend, sorrow has taught you much. Heaven is no easy place to win. God saw that to wean your heart from earth and make you look towards Heaven, he had to send you sorrow. Do you understand?”

ROBERTSON, SR. “Yes.” (*Much overcome, he leans his head on his hand, and at this juncture, Quincey dashes in from the back entrance*).

QUINCEY—“Oh, Grandma, Grandma, de movy picture man wants to know—” (*Stops suddenly and stares open-mouthed at Mr. Robertson*).

GRANDMA—(*Severely*). “Quincey, how often have I told you not to make such an entrance into a room?”

QUINCEY—(*Engrossed in staring says—*) ‘Ya’, yas ‘am, yas ‘am.”

GRANDMA—(*Out of patience*). “Quincey!”

QUINCEY—(*Still staring at Mr. Robertson*). “Yes ‘am.” (*To audience*). “Gosh! He am crying.” (*Turning to Grandma*). “De movey picture man wants ter know—”

GRANDMA—(*With dignity*). “Quincey, leave the room and remain out until I send for you. And Quincey, you are not to speak about Mr. Robertson. He is not feeling well.”

QUINCEY—(*All interested again in Mr. Robertson, asks him—*) “Does yo’ haid ache?”

ROBERTSON—(*Laughs*). “Not my head, Quincey.”

QUINCEY—(*Very curious*). “Got a belly-ache?”

GRANDMA—(*Provoked but amused*). “How often am I to tell you to leave the room?” (*Quincey exits. Enter Dinah, Robertson Junior, and Mrs. Hilton, all laughing.*)

ROBERTSON, JR. “Oh, father, we have had a regular picnic down at the barn. Haven’t we, Mrs. Hilton?”

MRS. HILTON—“I should say so. I have never enjoyed any-

thing so much in my life. You missed it, Grandma.” (*Looks around laughingly*). “Where’s that boy? Oh, Mr. Jim, wasn’t Dinah a picture?”

DINAH—(*Delighted, takes center*). “Picture nothing, You had ought to have seen Mrs. Hilton and Massa Jim. I tell you, they made a scrumptuous couple and William said we’d have a divorce soon, if we didn’t look out.” (*At the word “Divorce,” Grandma and Robertson, Sr. start and look at each other*).

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Laughing—*) “You wicked old sinner, suggesting such a thing. We were just having our pictures ‘took,’ as Quincey has it. Grandma, he wants to take pictures of these beautiful rooms. Says you have the prettiest house in this country.”

Enter—(Jack left, crosses right to Grandma).

JACK—“Grandma, father just received a letter from—” (*Quincey interrupts*).

QUINCEY—“De movey man wants ter know—” (*Interrupted by Robertson, Jr.*)

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Yes,” Grandma, he is a very nice fellow, staging a Nebraska scenario. He thinks *this* is an ideal place, and wants to use it in the pictures. Mr. Allingham gave him permission to take the farm, but it is up to you to allow him to photograph the house.” (*Quincey and Jack jump up against each other in their endeavor to attract Grandma’s attention, both speak together—*)

QUINCEY—“De movey man wants to board here—”

JACK—“Father told me to tell you the girls are coming.” (*All laugh, as Grandma smiling, gently pulls the boys to the front with—*)

GRANDMA—“One at a time, if you please. Well, Jack, what is your important mission.”

JACK—“The postman gave father a letter from the convent, and Mollie says she is coming home with Agnes and Carleone.”

QUINCEY—(*Utters a howl of delight, turns a somersault, stands erect dancing a shuffle, with—*) “Oh, Charley Honey is gwine to come, and Agnes and Mollie. O—Oh! Oh!”

GRANDMA—(*With decision*). “Quincey, behave. I cannot hear. Why are they coming in *May*, Jack? Is there any sickness? Is the school closed?”

JACK—“I don’t know, Grandma. Father was fussing with Ben-

ton about that bay and only took time to tell me the girls were to be here in a couple of days.”

GRANDMA—“Dear me, I hope that there is nothing wrong. This was to be Mollie’s and Carleone’s graduating year.”

JACK—“Father said something about a mortgage—”

GRANDMA—“Mortgage! What can it mean?”

MRS. HILTON—“Dear Mrs. Allingham, do pay attention to this delightful darkey. I am afraid something serious will happen if you do not.”

GRANDMA—“Well, Quincey, what do *you* want?”

QUINCEY—“Uncle William wants ter know if you will board the movey man for a couple weeks.”

GRANDMA—(*With dignity*). “Board him? Why, I never took boarders in my life. If I have a room to spare, he can gladly have it.” (*Enter movey man with some apparatus*).

MOVEY MAN—(*Bows to company, advances to Grandma*). *N. B. This character can be substituted from the farm hands*. “Me and my boss, Mr. West, would be grateful, madam, if you could board us for a couple of weeks and in the meantime, allow us the great privilege of making pictures of the prettiest house in the county. Mr. West, my boss, is at present in Tennessee taking some scenes for another play, but he expects to join me in a few days and get busy on this Nebraska play.” (*Jack and Quincey catch hold of Dinah, try to place her left for a picture, Dinah struggling first good-humoredly, then angrily throws them off with—*)

DINAH—“Huh, quit yo’r fooling, you young imps. Grandma, call them.”

GRANDMA—“Boys!” (*To movey man*). “As for giving you board, that I could not do, as I never have done so in my life—”

DINAH—(*Aside to boys*). “Board! Huh, I should say not. De fust ladies of Virginny don’t take boarders.”

GRANDMA—(*Who has taken the card of movey man and read it, continues—*) “As for giving you hospitality, Mr. Smith, I should be delighted if I had the room, but if my granddaughter and her friends are coming, it will be out of the question, but I shall interest myself in getting you comfortable quarters down at Mr. Benton’s place. They would be delighted to take a few boarders, and it is only a half hour’s walk from here.”

ROBERTSON, SR. (*Advancing left to Grandma*). "Permit me a suggestion, madam. My son and I could room together, could we not Jim?"

JIM—(*who has been talking with Mrs. Hilton in the back, advances center, with—*). "Of course, father, it wont be the first time we've bunked together." (*Throwing his arm about his father*).

GRANDMA—(*Decidedly*). "That is out of the question."

JACK—"Say, Grandma, let Mr. Jim and I sleep together." (*Turning to Robertson, Jr.*) "Wouldn't that go?"

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Laughing*). "Immense, Jack. Maybe we wouldn't have pillow fights."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Laughing*). "In deference to Mrs. Alingham's linen, I think the first proposition the better, Jim." (*The movey man who has been looking from one to the other, advances right of Grandma saying—*)

MOVEY MAN—"Don't mind bothering, madam, I shall go down to Benton's but I hope that you will allow us to take the interior of this house?"

(*Enter—William at the back, followed by Dinah and Sue carrying pans of vegetables which they prepare for dinner at the back. While William advancing to center, gives letter to Grandma, which she holds as she answers the movey man*).

GRANDMA—"Make moving pictures of my home to show in public? O, dear no. I couldn't bear the thought of everyone looking at my loved home."

WILLIAM—"I am astonished at my democratic mother, refusing the public the pleasure of enjoying a sight of a home that has always been an open door to every one, *tramp* or *gentleman*. What's come over you, mother?"

GRANDMA—"What you say is true, William. My life work has been to add to the happiness of others. Yes, Mr. Smith, you may take the pictures, but I should not like to see the members of my family figuring in public." (*Dinah, Quincey and Jack look aghast*).

MRS. HILTON—"Why, Grandma, all our pictures were 'took,' as Quincey says, down at the barnyard."

GRANDMA—(*Severely*). "Well, they are not to be repeated as far as the members of my family are concerned. You, of course, Jessie, can do as you please. Dinah, take the gentleman through the

different rooms, but see to it that none of us are taken.” (*Reads with much interest at the back of the room.*)

DINAH—“Well, Miss 'Lizabeth, it's just as yo' says. Come on, sir. (*Pushing Quincey out of her way*). “G'way dar, yo' imp of satan.” (*Exit left with the movey man. Grandma exit right.*)

MRS. HILTON—(*Crossing left to William*). “There, Mr. Allingham, I know that I have offended Grandma. I don't see any harm in having my pictures in the movies, do you?” (*Looks beseechingly at him, he laughs*).

MR. ALLINGHAM—“Well, I can't say that I do, Jessie, but it all depends upon the point of view that you take of the matter. With mother, her family life is a very serious thing, in fact a *sacred* thing. From that point of view I can well understand her attitude. With you, it is different, not having any idea of *family* life. The publicity of the moving pictures is for *you* all right.” (*William exit*).

MRS. HILTON—(*Pouting*). “Listen to him. No idea of *family* life, just because I like a little gaiety.” (*Crosses to Mr. Robertson, Sr.*) “Mr. Robertson, what a fuss they are making about these pictures. Why naturally the picture man wanted the handsomest persons he could get, and it goes without saying, that your son and I are the best looking here except yourself, of course. Now don't you think so?” (*Smiles up at him. Robertson, Sr. looks serious, but smiles kindly at her as he speaks.*).

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Aside,—*) “Only a child!” “You both have your share of good looks, but I do not agree with your view of the pictures.”

MRS. HILTON—(*Tossing her head exits, but says before she leaves—*) “That is because you didn't see them.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Walks slowly across the stage front, looking back from time to time at Robertson, Jr., who has seated himself on the settee*). “Jim, come here.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Rises slowly, tying and untying his neck-tie, seeming absorbed comes center*). “Well, father, what is it?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—Jim, was your picture taken with Mrs. Hilton?”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Startled*). “Sure thing.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Was Hilton around?”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Annoyed*). “Hilton around? Around what? What do you suppose he was around, father?”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Come, come, Jim. You are evading the question.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—“By George, I don’t know what you are driving at, father.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“ ’Tis a new thing, Jim for you to bandy words with me. Son, you know what I am asking you. Was Mrs. Hilton’s husband present when you and Mrs. Hilton’s pictures were taken *together*?”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Growing angry*). “Mrs. Hilton’s husband is hardly ever *present*. I don’t know what she married such a man for.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“That is it, Jim, she is married.” (*Very pointedly*).

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Hotly*). “What the devil are you driving at, father? I am no child.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Sadly*). “You have said it, Jim. You are no longer a child.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Then why are you treating me as one? What are you suggesting? That I have no honor, because I try to make a poor little woman, tied to an unsympathetic idiot, happy for a moment? Am I to be catechised? Those two are not *congenial*. She as much as told me she will be *forced* to get a divorce.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Terribly agitated*). “Divorce! Jim, you know the Episcopal church does not sanction divorce. Has it gone that far?”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Very angry*). “No, but you have gone crazy, father.” (*Exit*).

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Center tossing his hands up*). “My God! Spare me that! He is her son.” (*Door R. C.*)

CURTAIN

FIRST ACT—SCENE TWO

(The setting of First Scene may be used in Second Scene.)

(If convenient to stage director, a drop curtain representing a back door leading out from a small sitting room, and showing a moonlight scene on landscape in keeping with Nebraska might be dropped, in middle of kitchen scene, a drop light; on center table, flowers, etc. Grandma near table. Jack and Quincey either side of her, Jack leaning against her, Quincey absorbed in whittling a bird house. Grandma mending.)

QUINCEY—*(Looking up at her)*. “Grandma, de meadow lark sang like this *(whistles a few notes with the orchestra)* today.”

JACK—“No, Quincey, he sang this way.” *(Whistles.) (Orchestra.)*

QUINCEY—*(Starts up and sings with dramatic action—)*

Oh, de mocking-bird of ol’ Virginny,
He sing when all is night;
But de meadow-lark of new Nebrasky,
He sing when all is light.

Oh, de possum cute of de cottony state,
He sneaks when all is still;
But de prairie-dog on de rising knoll,
He dance in winter chill.

But de mocking-bird and de meadow-lark,
They fills me all with glee;
But de possum cute and de prairie-dog,—
(Throws up hands.)
They all belongs to me.

(A darky break-down is danced by both between stanzas.)

JACK—“John Quincey Adams and I were watching for one hour a meadow-lark, yesterday, and Aunt Dinah said we were wasting

time. *Waste of time, watching* God's diamonds sparkle on the waving grass, showing as the sunlight shone through them, all the tints of the rainbow. *Waste of time, watching* a little brown mass of feathers dart across the grass, in an ecstasy of joy, almost bursting its throat in a struggle to tell *all* it saw saw in that meadow; thanking God for *all* the diamonds on the grass and the little brown babies hidden in the shade of the rising, knowl, and above all—" (*rising and stretching his arms over his head*) "above all, for the air of Nebraska, the grand sweeping air of Nebraska. Oh, Grandma, Nebraska beats Virginny all to smash."

GRANDMA—" 'Tis right that you should feel so, Jack. Nebraska is your state, but, bless me, I didn't know that I had two poets in my family."

QUINCEY—"Who am they, Grandma?"

GRANDMA—"You and Jack, Quincey Adams. God grant that you ever keep your hearts free and pure enough to enjoy God's beauties. Never is it a *waste of time* to study *His* works. That in itself is education but, Jack dear, your father worries when you don't study *other* books.

JACK—(*Indifferently.*) "Oh, time enough for that. That reminds me, Grandma, Father Mac told me the other day, when I met him in town that he was coming up here next week to see if Quincey here, knew enough Catechism to make his first Communion. He said that he feared that you had been too indulgent to him, allowing Quincey to have his own way about Confession."

QUINCEY—(*has been listening with an exaggerated interest, not unmixed with dismay. When Confession is spoken, he utters an aspirated—*) "Gosh!"

GRANDMA—"Yes, Jack, he speaks truly. I have been to blame in allowing Quincey to be so old before making his first Confession, but I thought as Quincey grew older, he would outgrow his foolish *fear* of Confession. I want him to realize what a *consolation* it is to the truly penitent sinner."

QUINCEY—"Consolation! Consolation, be damned."

GRANDMA—"Quincey, you dreadful boy where did you learn to swear?"

QUINCEY—"Mammy Dinah says it's de debbil." (*Laughing.*) "I aint neber seen him."

GRANDMA—(*Striving to hide a laugh, which Jack gives way*

to). "Jack, get me the Catechism out of the drawer in that table. This boy is going, without fail, to Confession next week." (*Jack gets and gives the Catechism while Mr. Robertson, Sr., enters left.*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*At the door left.*) "May I come in?" (*Grandma smiles, rises and points to a chair.*) "I looked for you in the kitchen, where I have been used to finding you, holding your levee, but you were absent."

GRANDMA—(*Laughing.*) "That is one thing in which I have not followed William's advice. Years ago the dear fellow fitted out a beautiful parlor for Mary, his wife, and me; but habit you know, is second nature, so I had formed *one* in the pioneer days—that of sitting in the *kitchen* with Dinah. Mary *naturally* did the same. You see years ago neighbors were few and far between. My poor Dinah, used to the darkey quarters in Virginia, nearly died from homesickness, so to cheer her up I made my parlor of the kitchen. But sometimes when Dinah bakes a lot she makes the kitchen *too* hot for *me* and then I seek the shelter of this living room."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Seats himself near Grandma's arm-chair.*) "I have been out walking in the moonlight with Allingham, but as he was obliged to ride to town, I did not care to accompany him. I came back and, of course, sought the mistress of the home. You are busy with the boys?"

GRANDMA—"Yes, I was about to hear Quincey's catechism."

ROBERTSON, SR. "Please don't let me interrupt you."

GRANDMA—(*With a significant glance.*) "The lesson will not last long. Quincey, 'Who made you?' "

QUINCEY—(*With a delighted smile.*) "God made me."

GRANDMA—"Why did he make you?"

QUINCEY—"That I might love him and *preserve* him and be happy with him for all 'ternity."

GRANDMA—(*Severely.*) "The word is *serve*, *serve* him, John Quincey."

QUINCEY—(*Flippantly.*) "Preserve him."

GRANDMA—(*Shakes her head.*)

JACK—"He knows those first chapters by heart, question and answer, Grandma. Ask him the Sacraments."

GRANDMA—"How many Sacraments have you received, John Quincey?"

QUINCEY—(*Seems puzzled and answers slowly.*) “Two, Baptism and Maternity.” (*Jack doubles up with laughter.*)

GRANDMA—(*Smiling.*) “What is Matrimony, Quincey?”

QUINCEY—“A place of fire, where some souls suffers for a time.” (*All laugh. John Quincey is embarrassed.*)

GRANDMA—(*Kindly hands him over to Jack with—*) “Here Jack, take him to your room and see that he learns that chapter before he goes to bed.” (*Exit right the boys and enter left, laughing, Mrs. Hilton and Robertson, Jr., the latter starts as he sees his father but puts on an indifferent front saying—*)

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Oh, there you are, father. We were looking for you to go with us, but we couldn’t find you.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Seriously, but kindly.*) “I was not very far away. You were walking, too, Mrs. Hilton?”

MRS. HILTON—“Yes, we had a delightful time on the river’s bank.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Where was your husband, Mrs. Hilton?”

MRS. HILTON—(*Laughing.*) “Oh, my husband is poking around some haystack or other, reading Virgil by moonlight.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“You have a brilliant husband, Mrs. Hilton.”

MRS. HILTON—(*Seems surprised.*) “Brilliant? Well, if seldom joining in conversation be brilliant, he is truly wonderful.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Do you not know that he is quite clever at science?”

MRS. HILTON—(*Carelessly.*) “I believe that he was made president of some society or other.” (*Coaxingly—*) “But, Mr. Robertson, you know life is awfully poky if you are everlastingly studying. When I want to go out of an evening, he wants to stay home. When I want to bring people to the hotel, he is like a martyr, all because of that hateful study. I understand now what mama meant when she warned me, we were *not* congenial. I suppose you will think me horrid, speaking this way, but you are such a dear that I feel I could tell you anything; and your son here is just like you.” (*A meaning glance passes between father and son, partly defiant on the part of Robertson, Jr.*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Very seriously.*) “Mrs. Hilton, do you not know that husband and wife, in order to live happily, ought to

meet on some common ground. If science be your husband's hobby, why do you not try to study it?"

MRS. HILTON—(*Throws up her hands in horror.*) "Oh, listen to him. Try to study *science*! How dreadfully he talks! Would you want me to die? I never did a *thing* in my life that I did not *like* to do. Why, it would make me sick right away. *Papa* found that out in my baby days. If I were crossed in *anything*, there was trouble right away. My temperament is so highly strung. But *papa* said it was lucky for all, my disposition was towards making others *happy*. I am just miserable if people are not *happy* round me. Grandma, that dear old Dinah says I may make some candy for the boys, so I am going to make some right now. Mr. Jim, are you going to help pull it?"

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Gaily.*) "Help pull it? If there is one thing I like more than another, it is to make candy on a *hot* May evening."

MRS. HILTON—(*Pouting.*) "Now you are making fun of me. Isn't he, Mr. Robertson?"

ROBERTSON, JR.—"Fun of you, Mrs. Hilton, are you accusing me of hypocrisy? Why, I just *love* to make candy. Making candy is an occupation fit for the gods and when you make it in company with a *pretty woman*, (*waves his hands in apostrophe*) the Island of Hesprides is found." (*Exit Robertson, Jr. and Mrs. Hilton.*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Drawing his chair close to Grandma.*) "Mrs. Allingham, did you see?"

GRANDMA—(*Kindly studying him.*) "My dear friend, see what? See two light-hearted persons having a little fun?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*In agitation.*) "That's it. Is it fun? Since I have told you my story, I feel that I have a claim to your confidence. No, that is not what I mean; I feel that I may give you my confidence." (*Waits,*)

GRANDMA—"Most assuredly you can and must. God has sent you to me for some good purpose. I know just how you feel and what you suspect, but, my friend, the human heart is a delicate organ, not the *material* heart, but the emotions that sway it, so it must be handled with care. At present there is absolutely *nothing* between your son and Mrs. Hilton—just two care-free persons having a good time. Let your son think for one *moment* that you are *suspicious* of his intentions, and you will precipitate things."

ROBERTSON, SR.—"I know it, I know it. Jim, a fine fellow,

is restive of restraint. When my dreadful disgrace came upon me, I felt that all my hopes of happiness here on this earth were centered in Jim. Knowing that and fearing that anything might happen to lessen his love for me, I know that I often indulged him, often let his impetuous will go unrestrained, to find out now—”

GRANDMA—“That whenever we are actuated by purely *personal* motives, we are apt to make mistakes. Don’t let Jim know that you have *any doubt* as to his doing right—”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“But I have let him know that I *doubt* him—”

GRANDMA—(*Surprised.*) “You have? Oh, no, you don’t really *doubt* him; he is too fine a boy. You are simply worrying yourself sick over a *possible* happening.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Mrs. Allingham, do you know that there is such a thing as heredity? Such a thing as the child inheriting the sins of the parents?”

GRANDMA—(*Laughing kindly.*) “Mr. Robertson, I know that there is such a thing as children inheriting the physical or mental traits of the parents,—but the sins? No. Sins are spiritual, my friend and nothing material can give that which is spiritual. The grace of God wins against heredity.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Earnestly.*) “But the Bible? The Bible? ‘The sins of the parents shall be visited on the children.’”

GRANDMA—“Granted. The *effect* of the sins—not the *sins*, themselves. I grant you that the son of a drunken father will have a harder time to resist temptation than one that has a *sober* father. The tendency of one to drink is stronger than the other through his *physical make-up*, but the son of a drunken father need not yield to the sin of drunkenness, if he does not so *will*.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“Your philosophy is beyond *me*. His mother—”

GRANDMA—“My friend, you musn’t forget that Jim has a *father*; and, if I know human nature, a good man, and with the grace of God, and a good father, Robertson Junior will make good.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Much pleased, bows—*) “Thank you, Mrs. Allingham. Perhaps I *am* too fearful, but my life has been such a sad one, living in the shadow not only of a great sorrow but a great

disgrace, that I dread my darling boy going through such a life. You have had sorrow, Mrs. Allingham?’

GRANDMA—“Yes, I have had sorrow, Mr. Robertson. There is no life that is a *long* one, that is without sorrow.”

ROBERTSON, SR.—“But you have not had *disgrace*.”

GRANDMA—(*Dignity.*) “No, I have not had *disgrace*.”
(*Enter laughing Robertson, Jr., wearing an apron, carrying a large bowl, and back of him, dressed in a large calico apron, her arms all flour, carrying a large spoon, Mrs. Hilton.*)

MRS. HILTON—“See, Grandma, you must come to the rescue. Mr. Jim has fallen into *disgrace*.”

ROBERTSON, JR.—(*Holding up a broken egg beater.*) “This is the *disgrace*. Mrs. Hilton, anxious to make some *divine* stuff—*divine* hash, isn’t it,—ordered me to oxygenize the eggs.”

MRS. HILTON—“He started all the trouble, Grandma. He shocked Dinah’s piety by emphasizing the word ‘*divine*’—”

GRANDMA—(*Puzzled.*) “*Divine*?”

MRS. HILTON—(*Both laughing.*) “Didn’t you ever eat *Divinity*, Grandma? No? Well, that is what Mr. Jim calls *divine hash*. It is candy, you know, made of eggs and nuts and things—”

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Chiefly things.”

MRS. HILTON—“Don’t interrupt, sir. Well, I gave him the eggs as the easiest—”

ROBERTSON, JR.—“Easiest? Heavings! Why, I nearly broke my wrist—”

MRS. HILTON—“Yes, and broke the egg-beater in the bargain.”

GRANDMA—(*Laughing.*) “I see nothing for it, Mr. Jim, but to ride to town and purchase another egg-beater.” (*Enter Dinah left.*)

DINAH—“Looky ’ear, Grandma, this here Mr. Jim, he done broke the egg-beater I’ve had ever since Quincey were a little pickinniny—all with his ridiculous flirtations. He weren’t paying no ’tention to what he were a doing, and then they were both a-making fun of de Almighty, a-calling a candy hash, *divine*. Just thing of it, *divine*. (*Thunder and darkness. Dinah starts much frightened.*) “Oh Lord Almighty! Dare yo’ punishment. You shalt not take de name of de Lord God in vain.” (*Louder thunder, wind, Dinah rushes*

to shut the windows, Mr. Jim tries to help her but she pushes him off. Mrs. Hilton rushes to Grandma, Mr. Robertson runs out. Noise of cattle bellowing outside, confused talking and shouting. Grandma tries to quiet Mrs. Hilton, who seems very much frightened, Mr. Jim on left looking kindly at Mrs. Hilton.)

GRANDMA—"There, there, child. This is only one of the many sudden storms we have in Nebraska. It may pass away in a moment." (*Thunder very loud.*) "Child, try to control yourself. We women must be calm in moments of excitement. That is the best help we can give to the men." (*Enter Jack in great excitement.*) "Well, son, what is it?"

JACK—(*Left center.*) "Oh, Grandma, dad's in town and the cattle all unhoused and Jerry fears a stampede. Gosh! (*Noise of cattle running.*) "There they are." (*As he rushes out, knocks against Mr. Jim and shouts back—*) "Come on, you men, and get a horse."

GRANDMA—(*Gently disengages herself from Mrs. Hilton, goes to right door saying outside—*) "Please, gentlemen, help all you can. Jerry will show you." (*Calling back to Mr. Jim—*) "Come, Mr. Jim," (*Just as Mr. Robertson, Jr., attempts to follow her, Mrs. Hilton rushes to him and clasps him around the neck with—*) "Don't leave me. Don't leave me. I shall die." (*Enter left Mr. Hilton, who seeing the two, starts violently with—*) "My God! In Jim's arms." (*Then advancing towards them takes her with apparent calmness and places her in a chair with a cool—*) "Control yourself, Jessie. There is no immediate danger. This storm is likely to pass as suddenly as it came. Only be calm."

MRS. HILTON—(*Hysterically.*) "Calm! Calm!" (*Thunder.*) "Oh—That's just like you. Nothing can move you. Oh, you haven't got a heart or anything. Oh, I shall die—" (*Noticing Robertson, Jr., going towards left entrance—*) "Stop, Mr. Jim, don't leave me with Harry." (*Robertson, Jr., looks slightly disgusted, hesitates, looks at Mr. Hilton, who back of his wife seems to be wounded, and who in end goes out leaving Mrs. Hilton and Robertson, Jr., alone with Dinah.*)

DINAH—(*To the center.*) "For de Lord! What coming to you, Miss Hilton, insulting yo' own married husband? Chile, dat aint what de gospel teaches. What de Lord has joined—"

MRS. HILTON—(*Very angry*). “Dinah, how do you dare to speak to me like that?”

DINAH—“Dare nothing. Yo’ may hav *hysirics* on ’count de storm, but dar aint no ’casion for yo’ to snub yo’ husband every chance yo’ gets. He’s a powerful, good, young man just worshippin’ de ground yo’ walk on—”

MRS HILTON—(*Pettishly*.) “He doesn’t either. He does not care a bit about me.” (*Great noise of storm*.) “Oh!” (*Clinging to Robertson, Jr.*) “Oh, you hateful old darkey! If Harry were like you, Jim—” (*Mr. Robertson Jr., starts as she uses his christian name without a title*). “Why, Harry Hilton is just a block of ice. Look at him leaving me at such—leaving me with you, Jim. You have some soul, some heart.” (*Enter Grandma right; Mr. Jim pulls away, unnoticed by Grandma, from Mrs. Hilton.*)

GRANDMA—“Thank God, William returned home, met the stampeding cattle and headed them towards the farm at the moment the men came up, but they are all dreadfully tired and excited, so you had better fix a little lunch for them in the kitchen, Dinah. But stay, Sue and I can see to that. Dinah, you take this poor child and put her to bed.” (*Handing Mrs. Hilton to Dinah, the three in the center; Dinah tosses her head—*)

DINAH—“Put her to bed yourself, Miss ’Lizabeth. She sure nuff a spoiled chile. I done see to the men.” (*Exit.*)

MRS. HILTON—(*Pettishly*.) “I am not a child, Grandma, and I am not going to be treated as such.”

GRANDMA—(*Looks at her with surprise, but says quietly—*) “As you please, Jessie, but it is a time that *women* must work so you may go and help Sue set the table.” (*Exit Jessie and Robertson, Jr. Grandma sits wearily in center, leaning her hand on her head. Seems in deep thought, finally speaks. Storm ends.*)

GRANDMA—“No, I never had disgrace. Sorrow, yes; *disgrace*, no. Oh, my baby, my boy, why are you not here tonight? Dead? Perhaps. He must be; he would never keep silent for all these years, he that loved me so.” (*Enter Dinah, looking sharply at Grandma, advances to her, shaking her head.*)

DINAH—“There you go, Miss ’Lizabeth, worry ’bout de boy dat’s dead and gone, when yo’ had ought to be thanking de Almighty

for de one He left yo'. Yo' trabel a long way befor' yo' find another better than Massa William, I tell you'."

GRANDMA—"And you tell me true, Dinah. William is a grand son, but there were things in Charley, dainty touches of thoughtfulness that William never *had* nor never will have. I couldn't help thinking about him tonight when I found William gone to town, the cattle stampeded and no man to head affairs. Go, Dinah, they are calling for you. I won't fret any more." (*Dinah exit left. William enter right, walks quickly to center, rubbing his hands.*)

WILLIAM—"Talk about providence. If Providence wasn't watching over those cattle, I don't know what Providence is. Mother, when I heard the stampede, I felt instinctively that it was our cattle. I soon came up to them but they could not hear me yelling, with the thunder and the wind. It would have been all up with them, for the leader was headed right for the railroad tracks, when who should dash up in the dark but Bob Robertson. I didn't have any gun, but I knew he always carried one, so I yelled to him to fire right straight ahead up in the air. By George, for a man who has never been on a cattle ranch, he is a wonder. I hardly had the words out, when Bob fired. That settled it. Old Bombsy, the leader, turned smack around and dashed off for home with the whole herd tearing after." (*Throws his arm around Grandma and in turning her face to kiss her, discovers tears.*)

WILLIAM—"Tears! Great Scott! My Sparatan mother hasn't been afraid of a little storm, has she?"

GRANDMA—(*Smiles up at him.*) "No, William, I do not know what *fear* is, but I must confess that when I found you were not home, I could not help feeling lonesome for Charley."

WILLIAM—(*Suddenly draws away from her with a stern face.*) "Why, mother, do you bring back that disgrace? He is forgotten, what is the use of bringing *him* back?"

GRANDMA—(*With a great wrath.*) "Forgotten by you—you have judged your brother by man's cruel justice, but not forgotten by his mother."

WILLIAM—"Why will you persist in remembering a son who, if he is alive, seems to have forgotten your very existence? But, nonsense! He is dead; and, were he alive and to come tonight, by God, I tell you, mother, either he or I would leave."

GRANDMA—"William, if Charley Allingham left this house, his mother would leave with him."

WILLIAM—(*Pacing back and forth in front of Grandma, speaks bitterly.*) "Yes, that was always the way, mother. You always backed the good-for-nothing idler, with his fobbish ways, his love of dress—a good-looking dude, that was all *he* was. He wasn't any good on the farm; and what did he do with his college life? Tell me that." (*Walks close to her in great anger.*) "There wasn't a blot on a single member of the Allingham family, as far back as you can go, till—till—"

GRANDMA—(*Rises in great agitation, lays her hand on her son's right arm.*) "Stop, William,—don't say it. Don't——. Son, you have a bigger sin on your soul tonight, than your brother, if he be guilty. You have the sin of judging another without a hearing; you with your smug conceit on the *honor* of your family, are tarnishing that *same honor* with your pride and your hate."

WILLIAM—(*Turning quickly, says to left to audience*) "God, if she were a man, I'd strike her."

GRANDMA—"You speak of his disgrace. What proof have you that he disgraced us?"

WILLIAM—(*Turning with impatience.*) "Mother, what's got into you tonight? We have discussed every phase of this over and over. I tell you if Charley Allingham didn't steal that money from his class-mate, he would have *stood his ground*. But *he didn't*; no, sir, he didn't. When John Jones reported to the authorities of St. James College that he, Jones, had lost fifty dollars—, where did they find that same fifty dollars? Tell me, mother, where did they find it? In Charley Allingham's locked desk. What did he do? Did he come *home* to us? He *would* have, if he'd been *innocent*. Not a letter, not a line in thirteen years. No, he *is* a thief."

GRANDMA—(*Center of stage with great dignity. William left of her, slightly turned left.*) "By the verdict of circumstantial evidence, your brother, dead or alive, according to man's hard lines of justice—is a thief; but according to the verdict of every true mother's heart, my heart, until he pleads his own case, Charley Allingham is an innocent man. And if he acknowledges that he is *guilty*,—his refuge is still here.' "

WILLIAM—(*Suddenly moved, advances towards her, with—*) "Mother, mother."

GRANDMA—(*Runs to him and throws herself on his breast.*)
“William, you know that I love you. Your children have been my children; but oh, don’t break my heart by carrying in yours this bitterness against your brother.”

WILLIAM—(*Folding her to his heart, bowing his head over hers.*) “Mother, forgive me.”

CURTAIN

SECOND ACT—SCENE ONE

SETTING: A beautiful garden of the convent school.

(Enter Carleone from the back center, left, very slowly in deep thought. When she reaches the center, leans against a tree and talks aloud.)

CARLEONE—"How can I do it? How can I give them up? Five years is a long time when one begins to *think*—five years of love, of patience with a wild wayward, stupid foreigner. How much they have taught me and how *much* there is yet to learn! A life-time could never pay them; but for their teaching, what would my money mean? How would I have used it? Ah, my dear father, you knew what you were doing when you tied up my fortune till I was twenty-five. Would that you had lived that I might show you by my love, how much I regret the selfish, hot-tempered days of my childhood." *(Sister Ambrose enters left back of Carleone and gently places her hand on her shoulder. Carleone turns quickly, carries the hand of the sister to her lips.)* "Sister darling, can you read my thoughts?"

SISTER AMBROSE—*(Smiling, puts her arm round the girl and leads her across the stage to right, seat at base of tree. They seat themselves, Carleone at right of sister.)* "Read your thoughts? My child, that is no new occupation for me. I have been reading your thoughts for the last five years. Your face, Carleone, is as a book, where I may read strange matters."

CARLEONE—"Yes? And you may change Shakespeare to suit yourself, my teacher of English." *(Laughs.)*

SISTER AMBROSE—"Is not that the way to assimilate the literature of different countries, to make it part of you? But your thoughts, dear—you were grieving at the thought of giving up your school and teachers. I do not say your class-mates, as the two you love best, will be with you, at least for a time."

CARLEONE—*(Surprised.)* "How well you have read my thoughts."

SISTER AMBROSE—"And your graduation—Are you worrying about not being able to graduate?"

CARLEONE—(*Slowly as if thinking.*) “Yes, I believe that the fact that you are not going to have any *graduation exercises* the year I should graduate, is a disappointment; but the heart-ache is the separation—(*Overcome hides her face on the sister’s shoulder. Sister comforts her and finally kisses her head, with—*)

SISTER AMBROSE—“My darling, here come the girls. For their sakes, control yourself.” (*Agnes and Mollie run in right and throw themselves at the sister’s feet.*)

MOLLIE—“Such a search as we have had for you two. We might have known where one is the other is, mightn’t we, Agnes?”

AGNES—“Of course, why not? Why should not two great minds admire each other?”

SISTER—“Is my truthful Agnes turned flatterer?”

AGNES—“No, Sister, I am really trying to follow your teaching,—to tell the truth whenever I can, and I truly look upon you two as great; you, because you belong to God, and Carleone, because she has done so much with herself.” (*Girls laugh.*)

MOLLIE—“Agnes is deserving of the title given her by the Sophs.—‘The Preacher’.”

AGNES—(*Laughing.*) “Oh, the poor things! I always happen to be round when they are in mischief, and of course as it is against my principle to tattle as they elegantly term it, I feel it incumbent on me to bring them—”

MOLLIE—(*Saucily.*) “To bring them to time, Agnes.”

CARLEONE—(*Checking off on her fingers.*) “Slang! That is the fourth time today, Miss Mollie. The treasury of St. Joseph’s Literary will grow large if you continue your elegant English.”

MOLLIE—(*Rise left center, waving her hands.*) “Well, what is a poor mortal to do, having spent twelve years of her life with a Quincey and a Jack, on a farm at that?”

AGNES—(*Crosses left to Mollie.*) “’Tis true, what she says. I really think that Mollie should not have to pay so many fines for the use of slang because, as she says, her early years were spent on a farm with Jack and Quincey.”

CARLEONE—(*Left of tree.*) “Agnes, I believe could find an excuse for his satanic majesty. But as I am the treasurer of that same St. Joseph’s Literary, it is my obligation to see that the treasury be filled at any cost—”

MOLLIE—(*Interrupts, crosses right to bench.*) “I believe the men of the Bourse, the Exchange and Wall street are animated by the same principles, and, in their endeavor to keep the treasury full at any cost, are deluging Europe with blood.” (*All laugh. Agnes crosses up center.*)

SISTER—“I see, Mollie, that you are putting your lessons on political economy into practice.”

CARLEONE—“Into practice, Sister? Bless you, Mollie intended to write an essay on that subject for graduation, ‘The Brutality of War,’ and she is just airing her views.”

AGNES—(*Crosses down center.*) “Oh, how I wish she could have written it! I would give my life to stop this dreadful war.” (*Stands center, with arms uplifted, three back of her exchange significant glances.*) “How dreadful it is that the image of God should—that noble men should—be sacrificed like so many cattle. Oh, Sister, Elenore showed me the papers she received from her brother who is fighting on the line of———; he sneaked the papers out, and it is awful!” (*Trembles with agitation. Sister stands quickly and takes her in her arms, with—*)

SISTER—“Agnes, Elenore had no right to give you those papers. You should not have seen those harrowing pictures. You———”

AGNES—(*In Sister's arms, looking up at her.*) “Why should I not have seen them? Sister, why do you treat me differently from the other girls? Do you look on me as a baby, eighteen years old, about to leave school? Surely I should face the sorrows of life. I shall have to see them some time.” (*Carleone turns away and wipes her eyes back of Agnes. Mollie looks off right.*)

SISTER—(*Placing Agnes on bench and sitting beside her, the two girls on either side.*) “My darling Agnes, I do not regard you as a baby, and if my treatment of you differs from that which I give to the others, it is because you are not strong and should not excite yourself unduly. You know that the last time the doctor saw you, he told you to be careful about climbing stairs or high places.”

AGNES—(*half pettishly.*) “Oh stairs are not sorrows of others. You have often told us, Sister, that we should sympathize with the griefs of others if we want to be noble women, and how can we sympathize with others, if we do not know that they are suffering? I don't

think that paper hurt me one bit. I am a great deal *stronger* than I was last year." (*Sister and Carleone exchange glances.*)

MOLLIE—"But Sister, you have forgotten that all-important subject, 'Why St. Joseph's is not to have a graduating year.' Here there are ten girls of us to graduate in the first part of June, and the Directoress, a few days ago, springs a mine on us in the shape of a closing of an Academy that has been running twenty years, and further tells us that she will explain *later*. It is something dreadful, I know."

SISTER—"As you three girls have been with the sisters longer than the rest of the class, in view of the outbursts of grief that the girls will probably give way to when they learn the truth and as Mother intends telling them the truth today, she has already notified their parents, I have asked Mother's permission to prepare you for the tidings of the afternoon. The reason we deferred so long telling, we were in hopes we should find a way out of the difficulty. (*In awe the girls cluster round the sister. Sister seeing that Agnes seems more agitated than the others, turns to her and says—*) "Agnes will you go to my desk in the class-room and read that marked book. I shall explain to you later."

AGNES—(*Crosses right center, clinging to her and smiling up at her.*) See, Sister, I am strong. Oh, please, let me hear with the girls."

SISTER—(*Reluctantly.*) "Well, it is told in a few words. The European war has struck poor St. Joseph's."

GIRLS—(*Together.*) "The European war! But how, Sister?"

SISTER—(*Sadly.*) "As you know, our Mother-house is in Germany. Well, it has ceased to exist and——"

GIRLS—"You mean the house—is destroyed?"

SISTER—"I mean the house is no longer in existence, being blown to atoms, and that without it, our financial support is cut off, and that, owing to that, we are not able to meet the heavy mortgage placed on this house to pay for that new wing built last year, and the mortgage is foreclosed and St. Joseph's passes in a few weeks into other hands." (*The girls show their grief in different ways. Mollie dashes up and down sniffing aloud and cutting at the bushes with a piece of twig. Agnes buries her face in the habit of the Sister and Carleone stands apart in deep thought, then finally dashes out right entrance.*)

SISTER—"Mollie." (*Looks significantly down at the trembling Agnes. Mollie understands and after hissing the sister, exits left.*)

SISTER—"Agnes, I shall never forgive myself if this makes you sick. Control yourself, dear heart. 'Tis God's will. 'Tis His sign of love, His cross. If you love the place and you have only been here five years, think of the sorrow of the old sisters and don't add to their grief. You know they all love you, dearest. Be brave, for their sakes."

AGNES—(*Rising and drawing the sister to a seat.*) "Sister, I grieve for more than that. You, who have known my inmost thought, know my *heart's* ambition. You know the Day of my Graduation was to see my entrance into Religion—was to see me *one* of you,—and now—I know there are other convents, other orders, but *this* is my choice and as you have so often told me this is the only house of your order in America. What shall I do, where shall I go?"

SISTER—(*Struggling to control herself.*) "My child, you say truly. Your beautiful soul was ever an open book to me; but let me ask you, Agnes, have I *ever encouraged* you in the thought of being in Religion?"

AGNES—(*Thoughtful for a moment, says in evident surprise.*) "Now that I think of it, you *never* did. Is it possible that you didn't want me to? When the Lord told me so plainly *He* wanted me?"

SISTER—(*Weeps.*) "Yes, Agnes, the Lord wants you."

AGNES—(*Delighted and quickly.*) "You say so, then why was it you never encouraged me? Tell me, dear Sister, is there not some way that it may be fixed that I may be one of you?"

SISTER—(*In an agony.*) "Oh, child of my heart, must I be the one to break it to you?"

AGNES—(*Puzzled.*) "Break what?"

SISTER—"I told you, dear child, that the Lord wants you, but not as you desire. He wants your heart, Agnes. He wants your will."

AGNES—(*Simply.*) "'He has long had both.'"

SISTER—(*Significantly.*) "Not both."

AGNES—(*Terrified as the significance of the sister's meaning dawns upon her.*) "Oh, Sister, what do you mean? Tell me quickly."

SISTER—"I mean, though every sister here would welcome you

with open arms if you were in a condition to enter Religion, none with a conscience could welcome one as *near death* as you are."

AGNES—"Death? Death?"

SISTER—"Oh, my child, don't agitate yourself. Did not the doctor tell you that your heart was bad."

AGNES—"But that is not *death*." (*Center.*)

SISTER—(*Left center.*) "With care you may live a number of years to add to your mother's happiness, but one *great* shock may be sufficient to cut short your existence. Don't take it so hard, darling. You have given Him your heart, complete the sacrifice and give Him your *will*. No greater love is shown in the service of God, than to be able to say with truth 'Thy Will be Done.' Can you say it, Agnes?"

AGNES—(*In great agitation, turns away from her.*) "Not yet, not yet." (*Exit slowly right and left.*)

(*Enter center Mr. West accompanied by Carleone. They cross down center to the bench and seat themselves, rather she seats herself, he stands left of the bench.*)

CAROLENE—"It was most opportune that I met you now at the Rectory. I don't believe Father Donnely, the dear, could give me half as worldly advice as you could, Mr. West. Sister Collette gave me permission to visit with you out here; the parlors are so crowded, on account of the sudden closing. It seems Mother has telephoned all morning to the girls' parents and they are here in crowds. But as I said, you can give me *worldly advice*."

MR. WEST—(*Bowing with a smile.*) "Then I am to infer from your remark, Miss Spinola, that you regard me as one of those unconventional monsters, dubbed by the nuns as **WORLDLY**?"

CARLEONE—(*Seriously.*) "No, I did not mean that. I want advice about some business and, as I told you I went to the Rectory to get it, if possible from Father Donnely, but on second thought I see how foolish that was. The dear old man knows nothing about the world or business. You have heard the dreadful thing about the sisters having to foreclose?"

MR. WEST—"You mean the scamps that are going to *foreclose* on the sisters?"

CARLEONE—(*Eagerly.*) "Are they scamps, Mr. West?"

MR. WEST—(*Decidedly.*) "Undoubtedly, they are. I wish I had an opportunity of horse-whipping them. Father Donnely knew it

before it reached the sisters; as you know my month's sojourn with the old priest has drawn him very near to me. Naturally, he told me a piece of news that interested him so closely. I am afraid that it will break the old man all to pieces, you see he has been the sisters' chaplain nearly twenty years."

CARLEONE—"Can we do something to prevent it?"

MR. WEST—"I wish to God I could."

CARLEONE—"Are you not a rich man, Mr. West?"

MR. WEST—"Indeed, I am not. Do you think me the proprietor of the movie picture concern, Miss Spinola?"

CARLEONE—"I thought you were. You seem to have every thing to say about the management."

MR. WEST—(*Smiles.*) "Not quite. Of course, for the last month that I have been taking pictures in this neighborhood, I have been in charge, indeed, I am in charge wherever the pictures are taken, but that does not make me the proprietor or give me the capital. Although I stand high in the estimation of Mr. Moore, the proprietor, I am simply an employee with a stated salary. You thought that I might help the Sisters?"

CARLEONE—(*Sadly.*) "I hoped so, but I am sure that you can help me in some way. Father Donnelly thinks so much of you and—and—Oh, I don't know—you seem to be such a responsible person, that——"

MR. WEST—(*Laughing and coming round to the front of the bench, looking smilingly down at her.*) "'Tis nice that you have such thoughts of me, Miss Spinola. I believe that you have kinder thoughts of me than the sisters."

CARLEONE—(*horried.*) "Kinder thoughts than the sisters! Why, Mr. West, how can you talk like that? You know the sisters must think a lot of you." (*Crosses right center.*)

MR. WEST—(*Apparently amused.*) "Indeed, I am glad that I stand high in the esteem of the good sisters. I feared that I did not. I have noticed that when I have been taking pictures of their beautiful convent, the nuns saw to it that the rooms were remarkably barren of pretty girls."

CARLEONE—(*Laughing.*) "Can you blame the sisters? Surely, you know that convent girls as a rule are ripe for any fun, except such staid seniors as I am. You see I am older than most of the class

and, in consequence, I have liberty. When I came here from Spain, I was just eighteen; I am now twenty-three. Papa had large possessions in Spain, but larger ones here in America, and he, wisely, thought that if anything happened to him, all my other relatives being dead, it would be a wise thing to see that I was conversant with the English language. So five years ago, I came here a wild, selfish, stupid foreigner——”

MR. WEST—(*Bowing.*) “Judging from the polished young lady before me, I should be pardoned if I do not give full credence to the selfish, wild, stupid, etc.”

CARLEONE—“Well, you may. Two years ago, papa died not leaving me as wealthy as he hoped to do. And then, too, that strange clause in his will ties my hands. I cannot use the small principle he left me till I am twenty-five. This is what I want to ask you, could that clause be in any way broken? Could I use this money to help the sisters over this trouble?”

MR. WEST—(*Approaches nearer to her with undisguised admiration.*) “Noble girl, ’tis a thought worthy of yourself, but I doubt if it can be done. I believe the scamps, the Scotter Brothers, will not allow anyone to deprive them of the pleasure of taking this old but magnificent pile. ’Tis simply a case of rabid prejudice. They are sore till they oust these religious women.”

CARLEONE—“But, Mr. West, wont you, when you arrive in St. Louis—you are going there before you reach Nebraska, are you not?——”

MR. WEST—(*Gravely.*) “I’ll make it a point to do so, if you want me to take it in.”

CARLEONE—“My bankers are there. Could you not see them and ask them if they could break that clause of my father’s will?”

MR. WEST—“I shall certainly make every effort to do so, but don’t build on it. The month spent here has been the happiest of my life. May I continue the free-acquaintance when I reach Nebraska?”

CARLEONE—“Continue it. Most assuredly. I am going to spend the summer with my two chums, Mollie and Agnes at the farm in Nebraska. That’s Mollie’s place. It’s a few miles from Alliance, a most beautiful spot. You will find there a real old-fashioned Southern lady in Grandma. Everybody calls her Grandma, though I feel more like calling her Mother.”

MR. WEST—“Why.”

CARLEONE—"Oh, she is not old like most grandmas. She is very youthful in her ways, but she is *such* a mother. I have never known mine, and I just love her. We have written to them telling them to expect us in a couple days. They were all coming for the graduation exercises, but not knowing what the trouble was, we did not say or explain why we were going home in May instead of June. I suppose they will be making all kinds of conjectures and Quincey Adams, an adorable darkey who calls me Charley Honey—I spent two summers on the farm—, will be about crazy."

MR. WEST—(*Gravely.*) "As I stated before, I am only an employee of the company, and in consequence I am not my own master, but I am obliged to take some pictures of that part of Nebraska for the play that I am posing. I shall have the happiness of seeing you at intervals? My assistant is at work there now. From the last account, he was taking pictures of the Allingham Farm. That is Miss Mollie's home, is it not?"

CARLEONE—"Oh, how lovely! But it is strange so conservative a person as Grandma, in the *privacy* of her own *home*, would allow movie pictures to be taken of it. But then, Grandma would sacrifice a good deal for the sake of others' happiness." (*Enter Mollie right cross left.*)

MOLLIE—"I think it a burning shame. "Oh, Mr. West, how are you? I thought you had finished taking the convent."

MR. WEST—(*Cross center.*) "I have. Are you always going to associate me with the movies, Miss Allingham?"

MOLLIE—(*Laughing.*) "It does seem funny doesn't it? But you remember the first time I met you some weeks ago, you were taking a picture of the class-room, and I had to break all rules and regulations by bursting into the room and almost getting my picture took."

MR. WEST—"It was took."

MOLLIE—"O— o— o—! Do the nuns know? You surely are not going to use it in your play, are you?"

MR. WEST—"I hope you give me credit for some principle, Miss Allingham, I did not have *your* permission to take your *picture*. It was an accident that I couldn't avoid and necessitated taking another picture of the class-room, as I had pledged myself not to use any of the young lady students in my public pictures. In my travels over Europe before the war. (*Girls together:*)

GIRLS—"Europe!"

MR. WEST—"The Norse Brothers paid my expenses all over Europe and I took many pictures for my *own* pleasure, when I got through with their work. I shall show them to you, sometime. But your picture—I assure you, (*to Mollie*) was an accident. May I keep it?"

MOLLIE—(*Looking down shyly.*) "Do you want it, Mr. West?"

MR. WEST—(*Approaching her eagerly.*) "I surely want it, I want something to bring back to me the happiest time of my life, and if Miss Spinola would allow me the great honor of taking her's just as she stands, for a memento, you understand——?"

CARLEONE—(*Hesitatingly.*) "I do not know if that is just the right thing. It was different with Mollie. Hers was an accident, but mine—If you will pardon me, Mr. West, till I consult with Sister—

MR. WEST—(*Coldly.*) "If you have any doubt on the matter Miss Spinola, that is sufficient." (*Walks right and stoops and picks up a flower. Aside—*) "Fool that I was to ask her. What does *she* care about me?"

MOLLIE—(*Mollie crosses to Carleone. Aside to Carleone.*) "Gracious! Carleone, how you hurt him. What harm is there in giving him a picture?"

CARLEONE—"No special harm, but I am not *sure* that it is *right*."

MOLLIE—"It is certainly *wrong* to hurt another's feelings.

CARLEONE—"That reasoning is *wrong*, Mollie. There are times, when in defense of *right* we are *obliged* to hurt another's feelings. But I shall try to make amends. (*Carleone approaching Mr. West, with outstretched hand.*) "Mr. West, I hope my not giving you permission to take the picture will not prevent you visiting us on the farm."

MR. WEST—(*Eagerly.*) "Do you care to have me come, Miss Spinola?"

GIRL—(*Enter excitedly.*) "Mother Bernard wants all you girls in the study hall." (*Mr. West bows to girls and they go out following the girl left.*)

MR. WEST—(*In the center.*) "My God, what shall I do? 'Tis the meeting of the roads, which shall I do? One step may spoil all. How pretty they both are, but so different. Dear Mollie wanted me to have it, but Carleone—— Ah! There is *metal* there. What would she

say if she knew I had taken it? (*Takes pictures out and examines them, drops one.*) “Here they are in a group of three, how beautiful they looked in the full glow of sunshine—Agnes, the angel, with her pure pale, golden beauty; Mollie with her studry strength, her frank nobility, her nut-brown hair and pretty gracefulness; and Carleone, in darkness, the *queen*—the woman. What right have I to steal these pictures? Am I not breaking my promise to the sisters? These are sacred—only to be looked on by *me*, till some day when I tell her they have made me a better man. They have restored my faith in humanity. Yes, I’ll keep them.”

(*Curtain on the First Scene of the Second Act.*)

SECOND ACT—SCENE TWO

SETTING: The Convent Garden as before—the same day towards evening. (Sister Ambrose seated in center on bench right with a portfolio of pictures before her. Carleone on her right, Mollie seated at her feet, Mr. West standing left of bench.)

SISTER AMBROSE—(*Looking up at Mr. West.*) “Yes, thank you, she is very much better. Indeed, I left her sitting up. I shouldn’t be surprised to see her walking out here. You understand, Mrs. West, these heart attacks, though very acute, do not last long.”

MR. WEST—“But for one of her fragile make-up, they must be very dangerous, Sister?” (*Aside—I wish I could find that picture I dropped.*)

SISTER—“Yes, I am sorry to say, our darling Agnes’ days are numbered. Still, there is no knowing. She rallies very quickly. Perhaps, it is her youth; but I fear that God will soon call her to Himself. She is almost perfect.”

CARLEONE—“Perfect! Sister, she is a heroine. Naturally gentle, almost timid, she never hesitates to do the hardest things, if she thinks them right. May I tell Mr. West (*Dark, Mr. West nervously looking in direction of bushes.*) about the latest trial, Sister? No names, you know.” (*Sister smiles and bows assent.*) “You are looking for something?” (*Mr. West, nervously.*) “Oh it is nothing, you were saying—”

CARLEONE—“Well, a week ago, a number of girls were holding a big argument, and the girl who was *wrong*, because of her strong personality was influencing the others to *her* way of thinking. Agnes was there and fearing to make a scene if she contradicted the statement of the other, our gentle Agnes remained silent; but that night,—she sleeps next to me—I heard her sobbing and got the whole story from her. She was grieved because she had proved a moral coward. The next day our angel made it a point to tell that same crowd of girls she had been a coward the day before because she had not contradicted the *wrong* statement.”

MR. WEST—(*Is very much interested and when coward is mentioned states—*) “Miss Spinola, what is a moral coward?”

CARLEONE—(*Seems surprised and looks at him before answering.*) “Why, surely you know, Mr. West. A moral coward is one who through *fear* of what others might say or think, does a wrong thing.”

MR. WEST—“You do not admire a coward, Miss Spinola?”

CARLEONE—(*With great spirit.*) “Admire a coward? I have *contempt* for a coward, physical or moral.”

SISTER—“Contempt is a strong word, Carleone.”

CARLEONE—“Not any stronger than I feel, Sister.”

SISTER—“Carleone, *you* would be stronger if you were more merciful.”

CARLEONE—(*Slightly angered.*) “Sister, you do not *admire* a coward any more than I do.”

SISTER—(*Rises to left of Carleone, places hand on the girl's arm and says impressively.*) “Admiration and contempt are not the same things.” (*Bell rings.*) “There is my bell. I must now leave you. You know, Mr. West, the regulations of the Academy, but as this is an exceptional time, I grant you a few minutes to visit unchaperoned with Carleone. But not longer than a half hour, the evening is coming on. Goodbye.” (*Exit left. Mr. West rises and bows low to the Sister and then crosses to the left of Carleone.*)

MR. WEST—“I appreciate her courtesy; but it strikes me there is a good bit of unnecessary espionage in the convent schools.”

CARLEONE—(*With a surprised manner.*) “Do you really think it *unnecessary*?”

MOLLIE—(*Dashes in right from center, followed more slowly by Agnes.*) “Pardon, friends, I hope I don't interrupt a *tete-a-tete*, but Sister Ambrose met Agnes, and sent us to keep you company.”

MR. WEST—(*To Carleone. Agnes crosses to tree west center.*) “Sister does not seem to trust me much. Possibly she fears we may *elope*.” (*Carleone and Mollie both laugh. Full moon slowly rises, effect of sunset on west.*)

MOLLIE—“If you don't hurry, the gates will be closed in ten minutes and you *will* have to scale the walls.”

MR. WEST—“Another remnant of barbarism—gates and walls, the latter closed in *broad day light*. Now in these modern days——”

AGNES—(*Advancing right center.*) “You remember the words of the canticle, Mr. West? ‘My Spouse is a garden enclosed!’ ”

MR. WEST—(*Staring at Agnes in a puzzled surprise.*) “A garden enclosed, Miss Redman?”

CARLEONE—(*Left of Agnes, taking her hand leads her to a seat.*) “You puzzle Mr. West, dear, you know he is not a Catholic, and probably does not understand the meaning of your quotation.”

AGNES—(*Putting her arm around Carleone’s shoulder, waving Mr. West to a rustic bench, motions to Mollie to sit at their feet.*) “Our outside brethern, Carleone, study the Bible as well as we.” (*Mr. West, who seems troubled, rouses himself to say—*)

MR. WEST—(*Turning to Carleone.*) “On what ground do you base your supposition that I am not a Catholic, Miss Spinola? You mistake, I am a Catholic.” (*Girls look at each other in astonishment, Carleone says with spirit—*)

CARLEONE—“A nominal one, Mr. West. To our certain knowledge, you have been visiting in this neighborhood for one month—first with Father Donnely, then with the Brattons—and during that time you have never attended Mass in the sisters’ Chapel.”

MR. WEST—(*Slightly annoyed.*) “There are other chapels and churches—beside the sisters’.”

CARLEONE—(*Slowly and doubtfully.*) “There are, but the nearest church to us is fifteen miles.”

MR. WEST—(*Laughingly.*) “Fifteen miles isn’t much on horse back.”

CARLEONE—(*Rises and approaches him with a charming assumption of penitence.*) “Oh, Mr. West, forgive my rash judgment. Of course, you could easily ride fifteen miles on a Sunday morning to Greyson.”

MR. WEST—(*Taking her hand and bowing over it.*) “Forgive you? I could forgive murder to so charming a penitent. But you are hard on Catholics that do not attend Mass on Sundays, Miss Spinola.”

CARLEONE—“You astonish me, Mr. West. No law-abiding citizen respects the man who *breaks* the laws, so with the practical Catholic, *he* does not respect the *non-observer*.” (*Crosses to Molly right.*)

MR. WEST—(*Crosses back to Agnes’ seat and says to the audi-*

ence, in the act of crossing). "The Lord help me, if she ever finds out." (*Then bending over Agnes—*) "How is our charming patient?"

AGNES—"So much better, thank you Mr. West, that I begged Sister to send the girls home. Grandma will be about crazy at the delay."

MR. WEST—"You do not intend to accompany the girls to the farm? You intend to stay here?"

AGNES—(*Passionately.*) "Stay here? O my God, if I could only die here."

MOLLIE—(*Springs toward her and gathers her up in her arms and soothes her as she would a child. Carleone and Mr. West look on with great interest. Mr. West seeming very excited as to the result of the excitement on Agnes.*) "Agnes, dear heart, control yourself. You know that none of us, Carleone, you, or me, may leave here with your heart and nerves in such a condition. You are ordinarily so unselfish, think of father and grandma's anxiety about us all. 'Tis nearly three weeks since we first wrote about the school being closed, giving no explanations, and here we are still—waiting for you to get better. What will they think?"

AGNES—(*Reclining on Mollie looks up with a brave attempt to smile.*) "You can leave me here."

CARLEONE—(*Crossing to Agnes.*) "Child, have some sense. You know perfectly well that we cannot leave you here. The Sisters are going to move out. Their mortgage is foreclosed; there is no saving them and we girls cannot go to the farm without you. You know how Grandma loves you. For all our sakes, try to keep calm."

AGNES—(*After a moment's pause, recovers herself and standing center, says—*) "Dear friends, forgive me. I should have thought of you first, but the sorrow was so strong." (*Half turns to Carleone who takes Agnes' hand in hers, pats it gently. Enter in great excitement a girl left who runs to center.*)

GIRL—"Oh, what do you think, girls! Sister Winifred met me and told me that the parlors are so full that she had to send your grandma and father out here and they are coming right now with Alice." (*Great delight expressed. Mr. West seems sorry, looks as if he were going to run out left, till Mollie in her excitement drops the portfolio she has just picked up and she and Mr. West both stoop at the same time and accidentally bump their heads together. Mollie rubs her head, laughs,*

and waves her hands excitedly, acting as if wild with joy. Mr. West thoughtfully rubs his head and says to audience—)

MR. WEST—"If her heart is as hard as her head, the Lord help the man who gets her."

MOLLIE—(*Laughing to him.*) "Oh, Mr. West, what are you saying? Oh. Joy! Agnes, sit down and keep still, child, till I bring them in." (*Makes a mad rush to center but is stopped by girl.*)

Girl—(*On steps.*) "Carleone, Sister said you were *all* to stay here in the garden till they come. There is so much trouble finding the girls for different friends, that the sisters are most crazy." (*Exit right, in house.*)

CARLEONE—"She says right, Mollie, you will only miss them. Think of dear old, gracious grandma coming for us. Be calm darling. Mr. West, please pull that bench here, Agnes is trembling with excitement." (*Mr. West pulls the bench forward.*)

MOLLIE—(*Excitedly looking off left.*) "There they are down by St. Joseph's walk. I'll run down there and bring them up." (*Goes to dash off but Carleone running swiftly across the stage, catches her and laughs.*)

CARLEONE—"Yes, you'll run down the path by the Angels and they may make the turn by St. Rita's Shrine; and you'll miss them." (*Mollie struggles to get away.*) "Mr. West, come here and make this impatient girl behave."

MR. WEST—(*Left, speaking as he crosses.*) "I suggest that Miss Allingham takes the path by the Angels and I go by that of St. Rita's, so one of us must meet them and direct them aright. (*Exit left. Mollie crosses the stage, exit right. Carleone crosses to Agnes. Immediately after, a little lower down enter Mrs. Hilton and husband, Mr. Robertson, Sr., and Jim. Carleone very much astonished meets them center and greets the gentlemen first and goes to welcome Mrs. Hilton, when Mollie dashes in back of Mrs. Hilton and throwing her arms around Mrs. Hilton, cries:*

MOLLIE—"Oh Grandma, Grandma."

MRS. HILTON—(*Laughingly disentangles herself.*) "Not quite a Grandma yet, not quite Mollie." (*Crosses right. Mollie greets her with evident disappointment, general excitement, moves around shaking hands, talking together. Mr. West has entered left, remains apart watching them.*)

MOLLIE—"But where is she, didn't Grandma come?"

MRS. HILTON—"No, I am her substitute. Mr. Allingham couldn't leave and wouldn't permit Grandma to come without him. There's woe and lamentation on the farm. Both Quincey and Jack are on a strike—Dinah raging, and Grandma sad."

CARLEONE—"But how was it you came Mrs. Hilton?"
(*Crosses back to Agnes.*)

MRS. HILTON—"Well—"

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Interrupts.*) "I offered to escort you girls—"

MRS. HILTON—"Yes and declared he wouldn't go without Mr. Jim—and I just would not stay on the farm without Mr. Jim—and—Mr. Hilton would not stay without me—so there!"

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—"By George, this is an ideal place for girls, 'tis a crime that the Sisters are losing it." (*Crosses to Mrs. Hilton.*)

MOLLIE—(*Eagerly.*) "Do you know they are losing it?"

MRS. HILTON—(*Breaking in.*) "To be sure we do, that dear old man who came on the train with us from Jackson. He was all broken up, wasn't he, Mr. Jim?"

MOLLIE—"What old man?"

MR. JIM—"That fine old priest, Mr. Donnely. Great Scot, no wonder the Catholics are proud of their ministers; he told us all about it, didn't he father?"

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Laughs.*) "Yes, and he got us all so worked up, that if the Scotters wanted to accept payment on their mortgage claims, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton and I wouldn't have had enough money to take you girls back to the farm."

CARLEONE—(*With delight.*) "How perfectly splendid of you Mr. Robertson, to want to help the Sisters, and you, Mr. Hilton, how fine of you to offer your money." (*Crosses to Mr. Hilton.*)

MR. HILTON—(*Seems embarrassed.*) "It wasn't my money, it was Mrs. Hilton's." (*Mr. Robertson, Sr., pulls him aside, across to footlights.*)

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—"That's a bad break boy, a bad break."

(*The others back center talk together backs to audience.*)

MR. ROBERTSON—"A man should never acknowledge that

he is in any way his wife's inferior. I grant you a hundred times that the average woman is superior, vastly superior to the average man, but as you value your wife's respect, boy never let the outside know that you are not the man of the house."

MR. HILTON—(*Sorrowfully.*) "But it is her money, and Robertson she let's me know it a thousand times a year. I know she would respect me more if I didn't show how it hurts, but it hurts."

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Pshaw! boy, if she has the money you have the brains."

MR. HILTON—(*quietly.*) "But she has brains and beauty too."

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Smiles kindly and understandingly.*) "To be sure she has, the gypsy. But you have more, Most women want the man to be boss. Don't you forget it."

MRS. HILTON—(*Who has been watching them approaches them on the right.*) "Say, what are you two talking about?"

(*Carleone who has noticed Mr. West standing alone on the left brings him and introduces him to Mrs. Hilton. After Carleone crosses to Mr. West, Mr. Jim crosses to tree bench followed by his father. Mr. Hilton crosses back to bench right.*)

CARLEONE—"Mrs. Hilton I want you to meet our friend, and our dear old Father Donnelly's friend, Mr. West." (*Carleone right center—Mr. West left center.*)

MRS. HILTON—"Delighted to be sure. But I didn't know you convent girls were accustomed to entertain young gentlemen in the convent grounds."

MOLLIE—"Oh Mrs. Hilton, his is an exceptional case, he is a personal friend of the Chaplain and through his influence, Mr. West has been enabled to take some pictures of the convent for some movey picture he is getting up."

(*Mrs. Hilton's manner grows cold as she says significantly.*)

MRS. HILTON—"Movey picture? Oh!"

(*Carleone resents the other's coldness by being more attentive to Mr. West, taking him over to the gentlemen and introducing him, while Mrs. Hilton right center from others says to Mollie whom she has drawn aside:)*

MRS. HILTON—"Who is he Mollie? Good looking enough,

but what are the sisters thinking about, having you girls entertain a movey man.

MOLLIE—(*Indignantly.*) “A movey man? What is the matter with a movey man? Is he, a genus, different from the rest of mankind?”

MRS. HILTON—“Oh, he isn’t of *our set*, you know. He is certainly not the proper person to associate with you girls.”

MOLLIE—(*Still indignant.*) “If Father Donnelly and the sisters have thought him a proper person to associate with us, I do not think you have any right to question it? And whatever a man’s occupation be, if he be a gentleman, that is credential enough to let him pass muster in any set.

MRS. HILTON—(*Pettishly.*) “Gracious, Mollie, I didn’t expect such a philippic. I *know* Grandma wouldn’t *allow* him to visit at the farm.

MOLLIE—(*Half ashamed of her heat.*) “Pardon me, Mrs. Hilton, I have my father’s quick temper. But if you remember you are only in America a few years, and you do not understand that some of our best families are interested in the movey business; and as I said before, a gentleman may be such in any legitimate business. But it was lovely of you to try to help the sisters.”

MRS. HILTON—(*Smiling.*) “Yes, the dears, but those horrid Scotter Brothers wont take a cent. Oh, you ought to have heard Mr. Robertson.” (*Crossing to him.*) “Aren’t you glad you came?”

MR. ROBERTSON, JR.—“De——lighted, as Teddy says.” (*On right of his father.*) “Yes, and it was a real act of heroism on Dad’s part to leave the farm.”

(*Agnes putting her arm through that of Mr. Robertson:*)

AGNES—“Mr. Robertson, you like the farm or Grandma.” (*General laugh. Jim doubles up and says:*)

MR. JIM—“That’s one on Dad.”

MR. ROBERTSON—(*Looking kindly down on Agnes and speaking with great reverence unmindful of the merriment around him.*) “Both, little angel, both. The Allingham farm is a beautiful setting to one of the most beautiful pictures of lovely womanhood, it has ever been my good fortune to meet. I mean Grandma.”

MR. JIM—“Jupiter! This looks serious. So all that enthusiastic talk on the charms of nature—”

(*Mr. Robertson interrupting:*)

MR. ROBERTSON—"Was honest, son, was honest. Yes friends, the farm life is the greatest blessing that man can have. A farmer has health, God's fresh air, everything to eat that the human system craves, and the viands on his table reach him straight from *God's own earth*, pure as God's air can make them, and if the artistic side of him craves beauties, he doesn't have to go to the theatre, to the movey pictures, he has them right before him, beauties of trees, hills, the waving prairies, and the boundless expanse of the unhidden skies, *God's own movey picture*.

(Great enthusiasm, all laugh and crowd around him.)

CARLEONE—"Take care Mr. West, or the farmer will put you out of the business."

MR. WEST—*(Bowing.)* "And right glad I should be; I am heartily sick of the movey picture business.

MR. JIM—*(To Mrs. Hilton.)* "He seems struck on Carleone."

MOLLIE—*(Clapping her hands.)* "Give it up Mr. West, give it up and settle on a farm."

MR. JIM—*(Who has been studying Mr. West, crosses to him slightly insolent and says:)* "You are interested in farming?"

MR. WEST—"Yes, I am very much interested in farming."

MR. JIM—"Oh, you are, are you?" *(To audience.)* "A prospective rival."

(Mr. West seems amused by the other's covert jealousy and crosses over to Mollie, pays her attention. Mrs. Hilton draws Agnes down on the bench.)

MRS. HILTON—"Agnes, darling, I am so glad you girls are coming home, you know I promised our dearest Grandma to stay a whole summer on the farm and if it were not for Mr. Jim, *(he's a darling,)* I should certainly die of ennui. Farm life, horrors! But Mr. Jim made it bearable. If I had to live all my life on a farm I should die, I know I should die of lonesomeness.

AGNES—*(Seems very much surprised.)* "But surely if your husband stayed with you, you would not be lonesome, Mrs. Hilton."

MRS. HILTON—*(Tosses her head.)* "Husband nothing, as Aunt Dinah says. Why child my husband is a poor fool—'tis only a question of time when I shall *have to divorce* him."

AGNES—*(Horried draws from her.)* "Oh, you do not mean it? You are making fun of me. Say you are, oh please say so."

MRS. HILTON—(*Decidedly.*) “Indeed I am not making fun of you. (*Taking hold of Agnes and speaking with great passion.*) “Agnes, you angel girl, you don’t understand, you cannot understand, being tied for life to a *mummy*, to an *Egyptian mummy*—a man without a particle of feeling, as cold as ice—why he doesn’t care *what* I do. If I hadn’t Jim Robertson to talk to I should go mad.”

AGNES—(*Rises with great dignity.*) “Mrs. Hilton, if I thought you *meant* what you said, you a married woman, I should never speak to you again. But I believe you to be, perhaps, nervous because of your long trip.” (*Enter girl, addresses Carleone:*)

GIRL—“Carleone, Sister Ambrose told me to ask you to ask Mr. West to kindly show the visitors the guest house, as it is *time* for them to go.”

MRS. HILTON—(*Indignantly.*) “Time to go! I should say so. Pupil and teacher *are of a kind*, one *insults* you, has the *audacity* to correct you, and the *other* sends word ’tis time to go. Come on, Mr. Jim; come, people. I am tired to death.” (*The others who have not heard the conversation between her and Agnes, exchange glances. Mr. Jim jumps to her side and she looking triumphantly at Agnes, sails out left escorted by Mr. Jim. His father follows more seriously, the rest exeunt except Mollie and Carleone, and Agnes follows on the arm of the girl. Carleone and Mollie center.*)

CARLEONE—“What in the world happened to her?”

MOLLIE—(*Laughing.*) “I can’t imagine, unless it was Agnes. Our little preacher probably had a qualm about something that was wrong; she got after me about the movey pictures.”

CARLEONE—“Who, Agnes?”

MOLLIE—“No, Mrs. Hilton, questioned if we should associate with a movey picture man.”

CARLEONE—(*Indignantly.*) “The idea! Mr. West is one of the most charming gentlemen I have ever met.”

MOLLIE—“He is fine, isn’t he? You think a lot of him, don’t you, Carleone?”

CARLEONE—(*Startled.*) “A lot of him, you say, Mollie?” (*Speaking thoughtfully.*) “I do not know *what* I think of him. I *do* like him— but a lot—What does a *lot* mean?”

MOLLIE—“Well, as a possible——”

CARLEONE—(*Embarrassed.*) “Oh, stop, Mollie. I never thought of such a thing.”

MOLLIE—“Well, perhaps *you* didn’t but *he* does. I can’t for the life of me tell whether it is you or me.”

CARLEONE—“Why, Mollie Allingham, what would your father think of you?”

MOLLIE—(*Laughs.*) “Think of me? Only that I was following in the footsteps of my mother. She was a year younger than I, when she became Mrs. Allingham. Come, ‘fess up, Carleone. What *do* you think of him?”

CARLEONE—(*Thoughtfully.*) “Well, since you will have it, I like and *do not* like him. He *lacks* something. I believe it is *backbone*.”

MOLLIE—(*Laughing.*) “Is it possible? I didn’t know that the human anatomy could *do* without a *spine*.”

CARLEONE—(*Laughing.*) “Oh, Mollie, be serious.”

MOLLIE—“I am as serious as a judge. You know, dearest, what a terror I was when I first came here to school, how I hated the place, how I despised books, and now——”

CORLEONE—(*With admiration.*) “Now, you *love* them so that I was hard pushed this year to keep *pace* with you, you who were walking off with all the prizes. Oh, Mollie, I don’t want our school-life to close without telling you what an *inspiration* you have been to me. (*Mollie becoming embarrassed, tries to shut Carleone’s mouth by placing her right hand over it, but Carleone draws it away.*) “No, Mollie, I will talk. You have so changed your naturally ease-loving nature for that of a hard-working student,—all for love of your *home* people—that, that——”

MOLLIE—(*Breaking away from her laughing.*)

CARLEONE—(*Laughing and chasing her round.*)

MOLLIE—(*Turning, pretends to pound her. Enter right Sister Ambrose. Comes down center with girls either side.*)

SISTER—(*To Mollie.*) “Did Mr. West take your friends to the guest house, Mollie. Yes? I am glad. Oh, girls, this has been a very trying day; thank God it is ended. Although we are losing dear old St. Joseph’s, we *know* now that we will soon have another. Girls, our friends have been so loyal.”

GIRLS—“When? Where?”

SISTER—"In a few years, we have the promise of having another. When and where, I cannot say. But you girls will ever carry in your hearts the lessons you have learned here. You, my brave Mollie, have learned the gospel of work; go out into the world and teach idle sisters there that true happiness is found in work. And you, my Carleone, with your beauty and your charm, see to it that *vanity* never takes possession of your heart. Remember, both of you, that there is in every woman a power for good or evil. You do not realize that now, but a moment will come in your lives that you will." (*Walks slowly towards left entrance, speaking with her arms around the two girls.*) "And when that time comes that you realize to the full the power of your womanhood—then see to it no unworthy motive dominates—that the best in you wins out."

CARLEONE—"Please, Sister, this is our last night. Let me stay alone for a little while here in the moonlight."

SISTER—"As you please, dearest, but do not remain too long." (*Exeunt. Before they pass out a workman enters back of them on the left entrance, carrying garden tools. He seems to be searching for something in the bushes along the high wall that surrounds the garden. As he is hidden, the head of Mr. West is seen four different times to pop up and down. Carleone standing at the left in the shadow of a tree is not seen by Mr. West, but she sees him without recognizing him as Mr. West on account of his face being shaded by a large hat. He seems to be also searching. When he reaches the extreme right, he stands on top of the wall walking a few paces on his hands and feet. Carleone, frightened, slowly advances and watches him in great astonishment. The gardener, at this point, is searching under a bush and as Mr. West jumps down nearly on top of him, he yells and grapples with the other. A brisk wrestling begins. Mr. West, before jumping down almost on the head of the gardener, says on the top of the wall—*)

MR. WEST. "Is the coast clear?" (*Looks cautiously around.*) "Great guns! If the nuns saw me now—" (*Laughs, and creeps a few steps, stops, looks around.*) "If they didn't have that pesky gate double-locked,—"
(*Stops and seems as if listening.*) "Shoot that bell, it gave me the creeps. Idiot that I am, to drop her picture. Wonder if it's in that bush." (*Looks down, but don't see the gardener who is under the bush.*) "Well, here goes." (*Jumps. The gardener yells and grapples with him. Carleone runs partly to the center, clasps her hands, runs left,*

then back again while the men wrestle in silence until Mr. West throws the man from him on all fours. The man jumps up, looks around, and runs out with a shout, as Mr. West rushes to the center bush, showing his face to Carleone who exclaims aloud with astonishment:)

CARLEONE—"Mr. West!" (He turns quickly, looks around and then rushes up to her, taking her hand.)

MR. WEST—"Carleone, what do you think of me?" (Carleone draws away with great coldness and says—)

CARLEONE—"I shouldn't like to say what I think of you, Mr. West." (Then looking hastily around to left and right, looks again to left and cries out.)

CARLEONE—"Oh, run, run! They are coming, the sisters and all."

MR. WEST—(Very much excited.) "The devil, they are." (Looks first one way and then another in great perplexity, then finally running up to Carleone just as Sister Ambrose enters, who sees his back, says to Carleone: "I beg of you to think the best of me." (Vaults to the wall and disappears just as sister enters; she stops and watches the wall over which she seen him jump, then Sister Ambrose runs quickly up to Carleone and asks—)

SISTER—"Carleone, who was that man, and what was he doing?"

CARLEONE—(Very much agitated, answers the last question.) "I don't know." (Aside.) "I sure don't know what he was doing."

SISTER—(Looks at her very suspiciously.) "You don't know, Carleone."

CARLEONE—"No, Sister, I don't know what he was doing."

SISTER—(Very rapidly, but impressively.) "Carleone, I did not see that man's face, but the back was the back of Mr. West, was it not?"

CARLEONE—(Very much worked up.) "You can ask the gardener, Sister."

SISTER—(Understanding that the man was Mr. West, is grieved and says in astonished surprise.) "Carleone!"

(Mollie, Agnes, and girls group in back looking in direction of wall. Carleone, slightly back of Sister, stands center with head up looking at Sister who is turned sidewise near footlights.)

CURTAIN

THIRD ACT—SCENE ONE

SETTING: Same as Act One, Scene One.

(Persons in the scene: Agnes in center in a large arm chair propped up with pillows, looking very calm and sweet but pale, her hands folded in her lap; Dinah in the back left behind kitchen table mixing bread; Quincey extreme right near footlights, with his back towards the audience, busily engaged in whittling wood, or making something. As the curtain goes up, laughing and talking are heard as if from the outside. As the curtain is fully up, Agnes turns her head left and says—)

AGNES—"So, Aunt, you and Quincey and I are left to keep house?"

DINAH—*(Advances slowly wiping off her hands on her apron and speaking as she walks. "Yes, honey angel, you and me will keep de house.")*

QUINCEY—*(Turns head quickly to the center and back again, saying—)* "Me, too."

DINAH—*(Scornfully.)* "Huh, you, you good-for-nothing nigger, how you keep house?"

QUINCEY—*(Without stopping in his work or without turning his head, answers—)* "Setting here."

AGNES—*(Laughs gently turning to Dinah.)* "Yes, Aunt, we need Quincey to help us. See how industriously he is working."

DINAH—*(Looking in the direction of Quincey.)* "Working? Oh Lordy! Littering up de floor you mean. Quincey, you low-down nigger, if you leave a shavin' on de floor, I'll wool you well."

QUINCEY—*(Without turning his head.)* "She won't 'low yo'."

DINAH—"She? who you mean by she?" *(Advances towards him.)* "Aint you got no manners, calling a young lady she?"

Quincey—*(Without turning head, but louder.)* "She aint a he, is she?" *(Agnes laughs and Dinah tries to smother a laugh in her apron.)*

DINAH—"Land o' Goshen! This wont kneed de bread." *(Goes back while Quincey, standing up with an effort, having a lapful of wood and shavings, goes to Agnes and presents her with a wooden*

doll dressed as a plantation darkey. As she takes the doll with evident pleasure, Quincey leans against her, looking up at her with adoration in his eyes and Dinah, full of curiosity, comes up back and seeing what the presentation is, throws up her hands in evident amusement and then goes back, asking—) “You fool nigger, what in heaven’s name does Missey want with a doll, and a nigger doll at that?”

AGNES—(*Laying her hand caressingly on Quincey’s wool, much to his delight, says—*) “Why, it is beautiful, Dinah. And to think these little hands made it all. You’ll be a great artist some day, Quincey.” (*Quincey, in dumb show, dances a short break-down. Enter from the back door in great haste, Carleone dressed in the old-fashioned riding dress, holding it up gathered in her right hand in the front, a whip in her left hand.*)

CARLEONE—(*Bending over Agnes and kissing her.*) “Darling, I had to come back. I simply could not go with the party, thinking of you sitting here so lonely.”

AGNES—(*Taking Carleone’s hands in hers and carrying them to her cheek and resting her head on them.*) “Oh, Carleone, Carleone, what will they think of you?”

CARLEONE—“They wont miss me. They have Mollie and Mrs. Hilton, and as soon as Mr. Jim gets back with the horses he went to Mason’s to borrow, they will have a host.”

AGNES.—“But the fact that Grandma is away nursing Mrs. Howard, and Mr. Allingham in town with a load of cattle, leaves you and Mollie for hostess and you *should* be there, or you should not have *invited* them.”

CARLEONE—(*Impatiently.*) “I know all that you can say, Agnes, but I repeat that they will not miss me. They are so engrossed with the novelty of the *straw-ride*, that I play but a second interest in their thoughts.”

AGNES—(*Anxiously.*) “But, dear, I shall not be happy if you stay at home with me, especially as you were the one to suggest a *straw-ride*.”

DINAH—(*From the table.*) “You, John Quincey Adams, come yere.” (*Puts a cloth over the pan, sets it on a little stool near the fire.*) “I have finished this batch and since Missey Carley Honey is yere to keep company with Missey Angel, you come along with me and feed the chickens.” (*Exeunt, holding Quincey by the wool.*)

CARLEONE—"Well, Mrs. Hilton is such an uneasy mortal when no one is round to dominate her restless will, that I thought in the absence of both Mr. Allingham and Grandma, a straw-ride would be a pleasure to her—but, as for me, I don't care for any kind of excitement."

AGNES—(*Studying her keenly before speaking.*) "No, I have seen that, my Carleone, you have taken to brooding lately, and it is not *all* on my account. Have you yet explained by letter to Sister Ambrose?"

CARLEONE—(*Embarrassed.*) "Explained what, Agnes?"

AGNES—"That it was Mr. West who had jumped into the garden the night before we left."

CARLEONE—(*Hotly.*) "I did not say so."

AGNES—(*Calmly.*) "It is not necessary, Sister knows as well as I that you would not have shielded a stranger, and three weeks are a long time for an estrangement between two devoted friends, Carleone."

CARLEONE—(*Hotly.*) "She had no right to doubt my word."

AGNES—(*With dignified decision.*) "She had every right. She recognized Mr. West, even with his back turned." (*As Carleone turns away with indications of anger, Agnes catches her by the left arm.*) "Oh, my darling, I have not spoken of this before; you have always given me, *unasked*, your confidence, but I have *no time* to wait. I must see to it, that when I leave you my best friend, I leave you reconciled to Sister Ambrose."

CARLEONE—(*With a passionate gesture, gathers up Agnes in her arms.*) "Oh, don't don't, Agnes. My God! Don't talk of leaving me. The only reason that I did not tell you, Agnes, was that *the secret was not mine.* (*Hides her head in Agnes shoulder. Agnes soothes her, lifts up her head and kisses. Enter at back entrance with his head turned in answer to someone, Mr. Jim.*)

MR. JIM—"All right Quincey, trot back to Aunty, or it will not be well with you. My word, Miss Carleone, this is a pleasure, indeed."

CARLEONE—(*Rising from her knees and brushing her tears away from her cheeks.*) "What brings you here, Mr. Jim?"

MR. JIM—(*Laughing.*) "Well, various reasons,—my borrowed horse for one thing brought me to the house from Mason's, and my *legs*, for another impelled by a psychological impulse, directed me here."

AGNES—(*Anxiously.*) “Now, Carleone, even *Mr. Jim* isn’t with the party.”

CARLEONE—“Mr. Jim promised to escort me on horse-back, but he did not rise early enough.”

MR. JIM—(*Pretending to be bothered.*) “Did I promise you, or was it Mollie?”

CARLEONE—(*Laughs.*) “Well, under the circumstances, I don’t believe you will get *either* of us.”

MR. JIM—“Now look here, Miss Carleone, you know that Mollie is tearing jealous of your superior horsemanship. Let’s make a compromise. You ride with me to the crossways, and coming back I’ll escort Mollie.”

CARLEONE—(*Laughing.*) “It is easily seen that young gentlemen are at a premium. No, sir, I shall remain here with Agnes.” (*Agnes is about to speak, when interrupted by Mr. Jim.*)

MR. JIM—“My real reason for stopping at Sunshine Farm, is to make amends to Agnes for my bearishness last night in refusing to sing for her, but that obstinate Mollie so provoked me that I simply couldn’t be amiable enough to sing anything. Get your guitar, Carleone, and accompany me.” (*Carleone gets guitar and sits on stool at Agnes’ feet and plays while Mr. Jim, standing right of Carleone and making mock love to her, sings. Sings “A Rose is like You, Love.” While he is singing the second verse, Mollie dressed in riding habit stands at the back door listening. When it is ended, she advances and says—*)

MOLLIE—“Well, of all things! Mr. Jim and Carleone. I think it was horrid of you to run away and leave me, Carleone, with Mrs. Hilton as cross as two sticks. Oh, Carleone *how could* you snub Mr. West as you did?”

MR. JIM AND AGNES—(*Both exclaim in surprise.*) “Mr. West? Is he here?”

MOLLIE—“Yes, he has been round the neighborhood for some time, but couldn’t make it so that he could get up here till *today*, jumping over a wall.”

CARLEONE—(*To audience.*) “ ’Tis not the first time he jumped over a wall.”

MOLLIE—“He ran right in front of our horses, and almost begged an invitation from us.”

MR. JIM—(*Coldly.*) “Oh, he begged an invitation, did he?”

MOLLIE—"Yes, and when I told him how delighted I would be to have him come—"

MR. JIM—"How delighted you would be? Oh!"

MOLLIE—"Yes, didn't Carleone step forward and say; Mr. West, as Mr. and Mrs. Allingham are unavoidably absent, would it not be better to postpone your visit to the farm,' and then without waiting to hear his answer, she dashed off leaving me to smooth it over."

MR. JIM—"Oh, you smoothed it over, did you?"

MOLLIE—"Yes, as he is coming here on foot, I left him while I came to get Carleone. Couldn't you, also, return with me?"

CARLEONE—(*Scornfully.*) "And Mr. West? Who will do the *honors* for him?"

Mollie—(*Surprised.*) "Why, Agnes, to be sure. You know how much he thinks of her. Come, Carleone."

CARLEONE—(*Passing to the left exit.*) "You must really excuse me, Mollie. I may join you later but at present I have something else to do." (*Exit.*)

MOLLIE—(*Surprised, looking from one to the other.*) "Well, what do you think of that?"

AGNES—(*Gently.*) "Mollie, you know our darling is not subject to moods. Forgive her this; she is not herself. I will see to it that she joins the party after lunch." (*Mollie kisses Agnes and exeunt Mollie and Mr. Jim. Enter Mr. Hilton left, looking cautiously round and then seeing Agnes alone advances quickly down the center.*)

MR. HILTON—"By George! I am glad to find you alone, Agnes."

AGNES—(*Surprised.*) "You are not with the party, Mr. Hilton."

MR. HILTON—(*Dejectedly.*) "Ah, they don't want me. Say, Agnes, I've got to talk to somebody. I was just making up my mind to broach the subject to Grandma, when that sudden sick call came and took her away; but you are the next best, Grandma told me that you were old for your years."

AGNES—(*Smiling sadly.*) "Yes, Mr. Hilton, when one gets near—near to—"

MR. HILTON—(*Seeming very much touched.*) "Near to heaven, you angel girl, I understand."

AGNES—(*Gently.*) "You want to speak about your wife?"

MR. HILTON—"By George, you hit it, Agnes. I'm all broke up; she is going to leave me."

AGNES—(*Horried.*) "Your wife?" (*He shakes his head mournfully.*) "Oh, you don't mean it? She wouldn't do such a thing."

MR. HILTON—"She told me last night that she thought more of Jim Robertson's little finger than my whole body."

AGNES—"But *he* doesn't care for *her*; Grandma thinks it's Mollie."

MR. HILTON—"That's what hurts. I know he's just amusing himself with her. I wouldn't mind her getting the divorce, if he would make her happy."

AGNES—(*Almost screams.*) "You don't believe in divorce? Your parents—?"

MR. HILTON—"—were good Methodists, that believed marriage was made by God, and could not be put aside. Bu I love that woman and if separation from me could make her happy, why let her have the divorce—if, if he cared for her." (*Buries his head in his hands.*)

AGNES—(*Watches him for a space, then sitting up straight and turning to him, says with great earnestness—*) "Your love is not love."

MR. HILTON—(*Surprised, he stares at her.*) "But love is sacrifice."

AGNES—"Yes, sacrifice founded on *duty*. You have failed in your duty to your wife, Mr. Hilton."

MR. HILTON—"I didn't have the money,—I had nothing to give her but my love, Agnes. I let her do as she pleased,—I—."

AGNES—"I am only a school-girl, made a woman by the nearness of eternity, but I say this to you, my friend,—whether your wife loved you or not, you should have *asserted* yourself and in some cases not have allowed her to do as she pleased. In no case, should you do wrong to please her. *Divorce is wrong*; separation is sometimes permitted, aye, even advised in our church, but never is another marriage lawful in the eyes of God when both of the married persons are still alive. The husband, Mr. Hilton, is the guardian of the wife's honor." (*Sinks back exhausted. Mr. Hilton rises with great solicitude and bends over her.*)

MR. HILTON—"Agnes, I'm a brute; I shouldn't have burdened you with my sorrow."

AGNES—I am glad, if speaking to me has made you feel better. If I cannot be a sister in the convent, I may try to be one in the world but, dear friend, have courage. You have not lost your wife yet. Now please assist me to the door of my room; a little rest will brighten me up.”
(*Exits, leaning on his arm. Enter Carleone and Mr. West left.*)

MR. WEST—“Now, that I have explained why I jumped the Convent wall, am I not forgiven?”

CARLEONE—(*Right, smiling and shy.*) “Yes and no, Mr. West. It was such a foolish act.”

MR. WEST—(*Bitterly.*) “It was not the *first* foolish act I have done. Oh, Miss Spinola,—Carleone, I have so longed for you, that I could hardly hold myself from coming to see you these three weeks back.”

CARLEONE—(*Surprised.*) “Why did you not come?”

MR. WEST—(*Aside—*) “Hang me for a fool.” (*To Carleone—*) “I couldn’t very well.”

CARLEONE—(*Studying him.*) “Another mystery? Mr. West I despise mysteries.”

MR. WEST—(*Sadly.*) “Then a man with a past?”

CARLEONE—(*Sharply.*) “We all have *pasts*, Mr. West.”

MR. WEST—“But a tarnished past?”

CARLEONE—(*Scornfully.*) “Is the tarnish in your imagination, or on your name?”

MR. WEST—“On my name. Carleone, I have done many a foolish act in my life, but this is without doubt the most foolish:—I love you, Carleone. I cannot *win* you for I cannot offer you an honorable name.”

CARLEONE—(*Proudly.*) “Then, in honor, you should not have told me of your love, or in telling it you should have left me the alternative of rejecting it.” (*Turns away. He starts, looks keenly at her, then smiles with delight as he says to the audience—*

MR. WEST—“Is she giving me hope? Carleone, forgive me. I never intended to go so far, but since I have done so, let me explain. Nearly twenty years ago, I had a class-mate in the University of Detroit that hated me as a rival in popular favor—I stood high in my class but my conduct was not of the best.” (*Eagerly approaches her.*) “Believe me when I assure you, it was only the wildness of youth. You are the first and only woman of my life; shall I go on?”

CARLEONE—"If you please. I want to hear."

MR. WEST—"Thank you. One day this student, he shall be nameless, told the authorities that he had lost a large sum of money. A search was instigated, and to my horror the money was found in my *locked* desk. My confused astonishment was taken for guilt, and I offered no explanation. My conduct to the authorities had been insubordinate; my companions were the wildest set in college and I was expelled."

CARLEONE—(*Passionately.*) "And you were innocent? But your people, your relatives?"

MR. WEST—(*Sadly.*) "They turned me down also, without a hearing. I *was* returning home with the *intention* to explain. When meeting an old neighbor, she told me she had been present when the letter from the University reached them and that my brother believed me a thief, and my mother——"

CARLEONE—(*Eagerly.*) "Your mother?"

MR. WEST—"Was silent."

CARLEONE—"Not because she believed you guilty. No, it was her sympathy; no *mother* condemns a child, unheard. What did you do then?"

MR. WEST—"Then I became a wanderer on the earth. For years I traveled. I have made good in business,—but I have no name nor home to offer the woman I love."

CARLEONE—"Is not your name West?"

MR. WEST—"My Name, Carleone, is Charles Allingham."

CARLEONE—(*Runs to him with outstretched hands.*) "Grandma's son. How could you doubt her love, how could you? Oh, Mr. West, you have been a—a—" (*Turns her head away.*)

MR. WEST—"Say it, say it, Carleone. A coward, a moral coward? (*Carleone turns away from him. He holds her hands.*)

CARLEONE—(*To him.*) "Yes, Mr. West, you have been both selfish and cowardly. You have thought first of yourself, forgetting what you owed to your family, but (*smiling up at him*) you have learned a lesson. Go back to the University; find the record of that fellow student; and see if you cannot clear yourself, and if you can not——"

MR. WEST—(*Eagerly.*) "If I cannot? May I hope? Don't be too hard on me Carleone. I have been richly punished for my

selfish pride. Do you know darling, my heart has been broken with home-sickness. Do you know there have been times that I would have been glad to die? Times when one sight of the home-light would have dulled all other lights. Listen girl, I have sat in the glamour of the electric lights of the Grand Opera House of Paris, I have experienced the witchery of the torch-light of Venice, I have been dazed by the splendor of the illuminations of the Dome of St. Peter's, but there has been no light comparable to the light of the Home-light of the Prairies. Carleone, if you refuse me, if you have no hope in my manhood, then there is no home-light for me. I am again a wanderer. Your answer quick. Is it yes, or no."

CARLEONE—(*Bows her head in thought and he looks at her eagerly as the picnic party enter, laughing and shaking out their clothes. Mr. Robertson, Sr., center of the party, Carleone and Mr. West stand apart left.*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Well, by George, there is nothing funny in a Nebraska twister. If that rain didn't come sudden, I don't know what's what."

MOLLIE—"Oh, see my hat is ruined for ever, Carleone, you are a shrewd one. I believe you felt the rain coming. Folks, I *never* go on a straw-ride again, *NEVER*."

ROBERTSON—(*Laughing.*) "Never is a long time, Mollie. The *straw-ride* was all right, it was that cuss at Washington, that weather man, that did the mischief. Ah, West, glad to see you. I heard of you being in the neighborhood. Too bad our genial host is away, and that peer of hostesses, Grandma, off on a work of mercy." (*Enter Dinah and Quincey.*) "Aunty, have you heard from Grandma?" (*Enter Agnes. Dinah runs to her and leads her to her arm-chair, talking as she crosses right.*)

DINAH—"Yes, Marse Robertson, I just was talking to Miss Mason and she said she seen Grandma yesterday, as she said she were a-coming today, that Miss Power is real well." (*Mr. West and Carleone exchange glances. Carleone advances to Dinah.*)

CARLEONE—"Aunty, at what hour do you think she'll come?"

DINAH—"Wall, chile, Miss Mason say Grandma said she'd come in the cool of the evening, I s'pose after supper."

MRS. HILTON—(*Advances right center to footlights followed by Mr. Jim.* "Oh, o—, o—, Mr. Jim, I surely have a thorn in my

hand." (*Mr. Jim laughs, takes her hand in his, draws off her glove and pretends to inspect it closely. Enter at the back Mr. Hilton, who watches the two at the footlights.*)

MR. JIM—"I cannot see anything but a very pretty hand."

MRS. HILTON—(*Pouting.*) "I didn't ask for admiration, I asked for inspection. Oh, it hurts awful. I must have got it in the hay." (*All laugh.*) "Well, you needn't laugh; I guess I know if I have a thorn or not."

MR. JIM—"Did they abuse the poor little woman? Of course, she has a thorn. Let me kiss it." (*Raises her hand to his lips, but Mr. Hilton springs between, pushes him away almost knocking him down.*)

Mr. Hilton—(*With stern dignity.*) "I have stood all that I intend to. Jim Robertson, I want this nonsense to cease. I want you to remember that this is my wife, and treat her as such."

MR. JIM—"My word!"

MRS. HILTON—(*First frightened, then delighted, goes to Mollie left center and says—*) "Oh, wasn't Harry splendid? Oh, I didn't think he had it in him."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Advancing left to center.*) "Look here, Harry, Jim doesn't mean anything."

MR. HILTON—"That is all very well; nor do the rest of the flirts mean anything, but *I do* mean something. I want him to treat my wife with respect or he'll answer to me."

MRS. HILTON—"O—o—o—. Why I could just love him." (*Exit Mr. Hilton.*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Pulling Mr. Jim to footlights left.*) "Now, see where your folly is leading you." (*Carleone and Mr. West go to the back in deep conversation, with back to audience.*) "You owe Hilton an apology."

MR. JIM—Apology be hanged. Hilton is a conceited prig."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Sternly.*) "He is a man. The one who interferes between two that are pledged for life, is a cur."

MR. JIM—(*Starting—with great heat.*) "Father——"

ROBERTSON, SR.—Stop, son. You know what *you* are to me; I would rather see you *dead* than a cause of strife between husband and wife. Don't talk to me about divorce. There is no such thing as a *just* divorce; divorce is as false as hell."

MR. JIM—(*Who seems touched by his father's earnestness.*) "I agree with you dad.

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*With a delighted surprise.*) "You agree with me Jim?"

MR. JIM—Dad, you and I are pals, ever since I was a kid knee-high to a grass-hopper, you knew my every thought——"

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*With a sweet sadness.*) "Not lately, Jim, not lately."

MR. JIM—(*To audience.*) "*He's got me pinched.* See here, dad, I'll make a clean breast of it. A short time since—I did lean towards Jessie's principles of divorce; but on serious reflection I have changed my mind——"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"Thank God".

MR. JIM—No matter how much a man loves a woman, he can't respect her in the end—I fancied I loved Jessie—in fact—I do—(*Mr. Robertson starts violently.*) Not that way father—and even if I did there is something in my soul that recoils from the thought of divorce——"

ROBERTSON, SR.—(*In burst of gladness throws his arms around Mr. Jim.*) "My boy, you make me very happy; but you'll explain to HILTON——?"

MR. JIM—"Explain that I was falling in love with his wife? Because he was such an idiot. That would never do Dad. Besides, I was only in fun today——"

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—(*Interrupting impatiently.*) "A pretty mess you nearly made of it with your fun, Jim." (*Enter Mrs. Hilton and Mollie left, while Carleone and Mr. West come up center, a porte-folio which Mr. West has taken up slips from under his arm and Mr. Robertson runs forward to help him, saying as he picks one up—*)

ROBERTSON, SR.—"That is fine. These are your European pictures, are they not, West? The girls were telling us about them.

MR. WEST—(*Gathering up the pictures and placing them in the porte-folio and shaking out one, as he speaks.*) "Yes. I have some pretty good pictures here—now this one is an actual likeness of the beautiful woman you see standing here in the entrance to this old castle. She was so handsome I could not resist taking her; and strange to say the picture resembles Mrs. Hilton very strongly. I wonder if there is any relationship?"

(Robertson, Sr., and Mr. Jim left of Mr. West; Carleone and Dinah back, Mrs. Hilton right, near Agnes; as Mr. West holds up the picture Mrs. Hilton springs before it hiding it for a time from the others as she cries in great excitements)

MRS. HILTON—"This is my home in France. And, Oh, Heavens. This—this is—the picture of my mother. Do you hear folks? My mother, just before she died."

ROBERTSON, SR.—(Taking it from her, looks at it, groans and reels as if he were falling, and is caught by Mr. Jim.) "Good God."

MR. JIM—"What is it Dad. Do you know her?"

ROBERTSON, SR.—"That is a picture of YOUR MOTHER. And there stands (Pointing to Mrs. Hilton.) YOUR SISTER.

(A slight pause—Agnes watches them—then she starts violently, throws up her hands with a faint cry and then falls forward clutching her heart, Dinah and Carleone both run to her.)

DINAH—"Oh, my Honey Angel."

CARLEONE—"Agnes, my darling."

AGNES—(Slightly recovering throws herself back in the chair, at the same time extending her arms.) "Oh the wickedness of the world. The sin of it. She was going to be divorced—to marry—to marry her brother."

(Mrs. Hilton half wild with excitement rushes to the left of Agnes, throwing herself on her knees beside her.)

MRS. HILTON—"Oh, no, no, Agnes—I didn't—we didn't mean anything."

(Enter grandma at the back followed by Jack and Quincey; advances quickly to the left side of Agnes, gently pushing with firmness Mrs. Hilton.)

GRANDMA—"Control yourself, pray for her." (Mr. West exit at the back unseen by Grandma.)

GRANDMA—"Agnes, do you know me?"

(Agnes with a great delight, but very weak, embraces her, who, with Agnes' arms round her neck turns to Carleone.)

GRANDMA—(To Carleone.) "Dispatch to her mother and William. Yes, dear heart? (Bending down to catch the words) Sister Ambrose? and Father Donnelly? Will you wait for them? What? It is too late? Let you up?"

(Carleone goes to door, but stops as she hears Agnes; Grandma stands aside; Agnes with sudden strength sits erect with an expression of ecstasy, extends her arms; room, filled with light of sunset.)

AGNES—*(In a clear and joyful voice.)* “Oh, Listen. Listen. Yes, Lord, I am coming, I am ready. Oh is that the Angels singing? That light? See that light—’tis the Angels’ wings.

Soft music—tableau—Grandma supporting Agnes, Carleone at door in back, and Dinah rear, Mollie on the right, Mrs. Hilton bowed to the floor left, Mr. Jim next to Mollie, Mr. Robertson left, Jack and Quincey praying at foot of arm chair.)—

CURTAIN.

THIRD ACT—SCENE TWO

Two weeks after Scene One of Third Act.

Same as Act One, Scene One. Curtain goes up on an empty stage. Mr. West enters from the back, cautiously looking around, then walks down center to the footlights, rubs his hands, smiles, looks either side, breathes audibly, smiles, walks to Grandma's arm-chair, leans on the back, looks smilingly down, takes up pillow, puts his head caressingly on it, puts it down, walks left center down to footlights, throws arms out, brings hands together with a slap, says to audience:)

MR. WEST—"By George, this looks good to me,—and feels good to me. Home at last, with a clean slate This is worth it all." *(Sits in Grandma's arm-chair with one leg thrown over right arm, his back turned to the center of the stage. Enter Dinah right above him and does not at first see him, turns back, calls from window—)*

DINAH—"Quincey! You Quincey! Oh, Quincey, I say!" *(Mr. West starts, puts on his broad-brimmed hat and pulls it low over his face.)*

DINAH—*(Goes to back left)* "I never seen such a boy—always round when there's eat's, always absent when there's work."

MR. WEST—*(Turning to audience.)* "Natural state for a boy. Dinah, thank God, hasn't changed."

DINAH—*(Fussing at back, call—)* "Quincey, yo' yere me? Oh, 'tis time you came." *(Enter Quincey right, doesn't notice Mr. West.)* "If I said there was pies for to eat, you'd be yere."

MR. WEST—*(Laughing, aside.)* "In strong evidence."

QUINCEY—*(Eagerly.)* "Is there pies, Mammy?"

DINAH—"Is there pies? The only pies you'll get, you good-for-nothing nigger, is a licking if you don't stir yourself and get me some onions. Here, take this basket and fill it plum full." *(Quincey takes the basket, dodging a slap from Dinah. Comes down center, sees Mr. West and starts.)*

QUINCEY—"Gosh! That looks like the boogy-man."

DINAH—*(Advances with curiosity.)* "What fool talk is dat?"

My soul, but that looks like de back of de ol' marster." (Quincey catching her skirts, dodges back and forth, peering at Mr. West. Dinah, turning sharply, throws him off, with—) "You, Quincey, aint' yo' done gone for dem onions yet? Git now! (Quincey runs out back, Dinah advances nearer.) "Say, nobody sits in dat chair, but Grandma. You yere?"

MR. WEST—(Without turning to her, but letting the audience see him smile.) "Yes, Aunty, I hear, but like many a deed in the past, I don't heed.

DINAH—"De Lord in heaben! No it aint; yes it is the voice of Massa Charlie. Am it you,, chile? (Hesitates, but as Mr. West stands and faces her, she rushes with a cry to him, falls on her knees and embraces him round the legs, laughing and crying.)

DINAH—"Charlie honey, Massa Charlie! Oh, my little pet lamb, is yo' come home? Is you come to your old Aunt Dinah?"

MR. WEST (Stoops and lifts her up, apparently overcome and places her, against her will, in Grandma's chair.) "Nonsense, Aunty, who has a better right than the nurse of Grandma's children? You sit right there."

DINAH—(Wiping her eyes and beaming on him.) "You sure say right, honey. I done nursed ebery chile Miss 'Lizabeth had and, Massa Charlie, you was de Benjamin. Yes, sa, you was. Oh, where you been all dese years?"

MR. WEST—(Drawing a chair near to her and speaking eagerly.) "Listen. Dinah, you shall know all, but first we must plan about mother. Is she around?"

DINAH—"No, chile, Miss 'Lizabeth done gone to town this morning and William, he's with Jackson Smith down to the Mill. They both liable to be home any minute,—and if your ma ain't sort of prepared for your coming home, she just as like to drop daid as our angel, Agnes, done." (Wipes her eyes with her apron.)

MR. WEST—"Surely, an angel lent for a short time to this sinful earth,—but, Dinah, you don't think my mother would be frightened if she saw me suddenly; mother was always a tower of strength in joy or sorrow."

DINAH—(Earnestly.) "I sure am strong, but my legs and arms is shaking just like I had the old chills and fever,—and all because you come so sudden. What then would your mother do?"

MR. WEST—(*Rubbing his face, mediatively.*) “By George, that’s O. K., Auntie. What do you suggest?”

DINAH—“Why, there’s nothing for it but to set and watch for her, and I’ll go out and prepare her like. Yo’ wait yere and I’ll go send Sue down the road.” (*Exits. Heard calling outside, while Mr. West walks back and forth humming a song.*)

DINAH—(*Outside.*) “Oh, you Sue, Sue, yo’ come right yere. Yes, I want you to go down by the bars and wait till yo’ see Grandma riding in de moterbeel, and then you run here like satin was after yo’, to tell me. Go long, I’ll splain after.” (*Enters as she says the last.. Walks left center to Mr. West.*) “Say chile, what for in the name of God, did yo’ keer about that dirty John Jones’s money?”

MR. WEST—(*Starts and looks at Dinah with a pained reproach.*) “Why, Auntie, do you believe me guilty?”

DINAH—“Believe yo’d rob any man? Yo’ de son of Miss ’Lizabeth and Massa Joseph? No, sa, no, blood ’ill tell, boy. I’d a killed that John Jones, if I’d a ketched him.”

MR. WEST—(*Very much affected, throws his arms round her shoulders.*) “Dinah, you may have a black skin, but your heart is red,—‘red with a deep veined humanity.’ Tell me, how does William feel about it?”

DINAH—(*Seems embarrassed.*) “William? Oh, he don’t say much one way or tother. Say, Charley, yo’ can’t clear it up, can yo’?”

MR. WEST—(*With a cry of triumph.*) “Clear it up? I should say so.” (*Puts his hand in his vest pocket, draws out a paper.*) “This is my pass, my character, Dinah.”

DINAH—(*Throws her hands up and sings the first verse of the hymn, “Holy God,”*) “There’s your mother’s prayers.” (*Changing her manner to one of anxiety.*) “Yo’ aint done and got married, has you’?”

MR. WEST—(*Laughing heartily.*) “Not guilty there either, Auntie.”

DINAH—“Oh, thank God! I got a girl in my eye fo’ yo’ lad. Only I misdoubt but you come *too* late. I am ’fraid she’s wasting her ’fections on some Mr. West, the girls met down South at school.”

MR. WEST—(*Eagerly.*) “Who is the girl, Dinah?”

DINAH—“She’s a Spanish girl stopping with Mollie and Agnes, the angel that died. Charley Honey, we call her.”

MR. WEST—(*Trying to control his delight*) “She is gone on a Mr. West, you say?”

DINAH—“Well, I don’t know as I had ought to have said that, only I heard Mollie and Agnes, afor’ she died, talking ’bout it and I,—since the funeral two weeks ago, Carleone seems to be grieving for more than a girl-friend, though she was an angel—” (*William heard calling outside.*)

WILLIAM—“Quincey, oh, Quincey, I say!”

DINAH—(*In great excitement.*) “Oh, for the love of God, run Massa Charley, run! Don’t meet William till your mother comes home.” (*Tries to push him out left. Enter William back center, advances rapidly till on the right of Mr. West right center, stops short with an aspirated—*)

WILLIAM—“Charley Allingham!” (*Dinah back.*)

MR. WEST—(*Smiles, advances with outstretched hand.*) “The same Will. You look as if you saw a ghost. Wont you shake hands, brother?”

WILLIAM—(*Sternly.*) “The hand I take must be clean.”

MR. WEST—(*Still smiling and holding out the hand.*) “This as clean as your own, brother.”

WILLIAM—(*More angry.*) “That is a bold assertion; your proofs.”

MR. WEST—(*Growing slowly angry.*) “The proof is my own conscience.”

WILLIAM—(*In a great flash of anger.*) “Your own conscience? Oh, your conscience didn’t trouble you much when you left your mother broken-hearted for thirteen years—”

MR. WEST—(*Gently.*) “You are right, William; I was a cad.” (*Enter back entrance, Carleone.*)

WILLIAM—“Look here, Charley Allingham, you are not going to come it over me with your meek and Moses air, you COWARD.”

MR. WEST—(*Losing control of himself and approaching with clinched fists.*) “By———”

WILLIAM—(*Raising his hand over his head, rushes at him and at the same time Carleone, running down center, throws herself before Mr. West, with upraised arm to protect him, says—*)

CARLEONE—“This is your brother.” (*Both men look at her with different expressions; William, sternly and Mr. West, with delight.*)

WILLIAM—"You know this man, Carleone?"

CARLEONE—(*Warmly.*) "Know him? Yes, I know and respect him."

MR. WEST—(*Very much overcome, turns away with—*)
"Thank God for her respect."

CARLEONE—"I know him as Mr. West, our friend, and as Charles Allingham, an innocent man."

WILLIAM—(*Angrily.*) "Innocent? Your proof?"

CARLEONE—(*Extending her right hand to Mr. West, which he takes with a great deal of joy, carries it to his heart and then, bowing his head reverently kisses it.*) "——is here." (*A pause; then—*)

MR. WEST—(*Giving a folded paper to Carleone, says—*)
"Oh, Carleone, my own Carleone, in that paper is a miracle of answered prayers. Read it." (*Advances to William, speaking rapidly.*) "William, I am a coward. I have been a coward, a base coward to have treated my mother,—you all— as I have done, but with God's help and (*Turning with a reverential look of love on Carleone.*) Carleone's love, I'll redeem the selfish past. Before God, I am not a thief; I am an innocent——" (*Carleone, who has been reading the paper, with great delight runs between them saying—*)

CARLEONE—"Charley, tell him quick! Mr. West, tell him, quick."

MR. WEST—"That girl, two weeks ago, sent me back to St. Francis College. The president welcomed me as if he expected me. For one whole year, they were trying to locate me, for they held a signed proof of my innocence in their hands."

WILLIAM—(*Interrupting Impatiently.*) "Why,—Why the devil, did they *keep* it in their hands? Why did they not send it here?"

MR. WEST—"John Jones, having been fatally injured in an automobile race, confessed on his death bed the injury he had done me, but made the president and Father Coleman promise that his written statement would be placed in *my hands*, warning them not to trust it to the mail."

WILLIAM—(*Hotly.*) "But, my God, why did they not let us know?"

MR. WEST—"You were only to hear the truth from *me*, and the Fathers by some medium found out that I was going under the name

of West and for all this time, they have been chasing me from place to place. Read the paper, my girl."

CARLEONE—(*Reads with great joy, while William evinces strong contrition for his harshness and Mr. West great peace.*) "'I, the undersigned, being in a dying condition but of sane mind, do swear before God as I hope for forgiveness, that I have deliberately wronged Charles Allingham. I stole the key of his desk while he was asleep, opened the desk, and placed fifty dollars in it, re-locked it and then instituted a search, the money being found in Charley Allingham's possession. He was expelled as a thief. I did all this through a spirit of jealousy and hate. May Almighty God have mercy on my soul. Signed—John Jones. Witnessed by President of the College, Father Russell, and Father Coleman, this day of our Lord, 1915.'"

MR. WEST—(*Gaily.*) "Well, brother, am I forgiven?"

WILLIAM—"Forgiven? Oh, Charley, how can I ever make amends?" (*They throw themselves into each other's arms. Quincey has entered as William says Charley.*)

QUINCEY—(*Left center, slightly back of the brothers.*) "Gosh! The boogy-man is Charley. I'll go tell Grandma; she's just coming in the gate."

DINAH—(*Entering and hearing the last.*) "You imp of satin, is you gwine for to scare Miss 'Lizabeth out of her senses?")*Enter Jack*) "You Jack and Quincey, come yere and get right out o' yere." (*Shoving them out left while Grandma, Mrs. Hilton, Robertson, Sr., and Mr. Jim and Mollie enter at the back. Grandma looks from the struggling boys to the two brothers and with a glad cry of joy rushes to the front while Mr. West, turning quickly catches her as she falls in a faint. She is in the center, Charley kneeling at her right side, Carleone left chafing her head, Mollie and Dinah running in and out of the room bringing in various things such as—water, cologne, etc.*)

MR WEST—"My God, am I going to find her only to—Carleone, is she dead?"

CARLEONE—"Dead? No, Charley, joy don't kill." (*Takes a bottle from Mollie.*) "Heartshorn is better, if you have it. Raise her head Charley."

MRS. HILTON—(*To Mr. Hilton.*) "Dearest, she called him Charley."

MR. HILTON—"Well, Jessie darling, from the looks of things

Mr. West is Charley Allingham. Hang me, if I aint glad.” (*Walks right.*)

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—“Mr. West, Charley Allingham?” (*Crosses left.*)

MR. JIM—(*Walks to father.*) “The prodigal son, Dad; such as I would have been if it were not for Mollie here.” (*Turns to Mollie and takes her hand.*)

MR. ROBERTSON, SR.—“The grace of God, boy, has won out in your regard. It was heredity against the grace of God, and your sister and you have made good.”

MR. JIM—(*Solemnly taking Mollie's hands in his.*) “I don't know that we have; with the help of God, we will.” (*Dinah rushes forward with a bunch of feathers which she sets fire to under Grandma's nose. She sneezes and sits up while the whole party laugh.*)

GRANDMA—(*Sitting up and looking round, Mr. West hiding in the back.*) “Dinah there is something burning in the oven.”

DINAH—(*Choking with laughter, doubling forward.*) Oh, Lordy. Yes, chile, ther's sure something burning. I's gwine to burn de feathers off all de chickens on de farm; to help celebrate de prodigy's return. Oh, Lordy.” (*Waving her chicken's wing in the air and doubling up with laughter.*)

GRANDMA—(*Anxiously to William.*) “But what has happened? William surely I haven't dreamt it?”

WILLIAM—(*Bending over her in a great joy.*) “Dreamt what, mother?”

GRANDMA—(*Eagerly.*) “Is—he—he? Oh, isn't Charlie here?”

MR. WEST—(*Bounding forward with a glad cry and arms extended.*) “Yes, mother he is here.”

GRANDMA—(*Half beside herself with joy, rushes forward, throws her self into his arms, throws back her head and with her arms round his neck, laughs wildly.*) “Oh, my baby, my baby, my Charlie. Ha, ha, ha. An answer to PRAYER. (*Leaves him and yings herself down on her knees near footlights, rises aloft both arms and says with great passion:*) “Mother of God. You did hear this mother. You knew what it was to lose your son. You knew the long, long waiting. Oh I thank you. (*Rising and throwing herself into his arms.*) “Oh,

Charlie, this pays for all." (*Hides her head on his shoulder, he draws her slightly back while Mrs. Hilton clinging to Mr. Hilton says:*)

MRS. HILTON—Harry, darling, I am afraid of her; she is always so calm and look at her now, she seems wild."

MR. HILTON—(*Patting her on the head.*) "Jessie, dear girl, I thought you learned the lesson that the quietest persons often hide the hottest blood?"

MR. ROBERTSON—(*Advancing from the right, and slapping Mr. Hilton on the back.*) "You are right son. Jessie knows that volcanoes are *Snowclad*. Our Spartan Grandma, a stronghold for those in sorrow, has for years so kept back the natural expression of her feelings, always losing herself in others, that now in the presence of a great and unexpected joy, losing control of her self, she unconsciously reveals the grand *MOTHER LOVE* that dominated her life."

GRANDMA—(*Coming forward, with gracious joy.*) "Friends do you know my baby, my Charlie? William?" (*hesitates, and looks lovingly at William, who, much overcome, advances to the footlights.*)

WILLIAM—"Asks your *pardon*, and his, mother.

MR. WEST—(*Coming to her side.*) "Mother I am innocent."
GRANDMA—(*Indignantly.*) "INNOCENT? If you were guilty a hundred times here is your refuge. (*Drawing him toward her with her right arm, while he, with his right arm, draws Carleone.*)

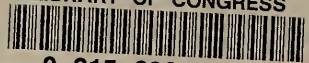
MR. WEST—"Mother, in finding your son, you have found a daughter."

GRANDMA—(*In great delight.*) "Carleone, my daughter?"

CARLEONE—(*Kneeling beside her, taking her hand and looking up at her.*) "At last, Grandma, I can call you *MOTHER*."

CURTAIN.

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